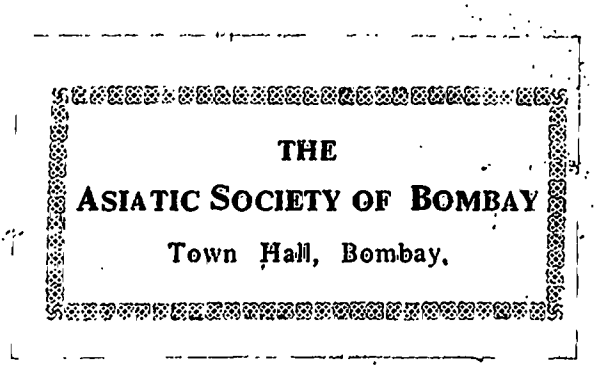

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THE HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETRY

TO THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE:

AND

ANNALS OF THE STAGE

TO THE RESTORATION.

By J. PAYNE COLLIER, Esq., F.S.A.

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Paris Garden.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXXI.

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ANNALS OF THE STAGE,

FROM THE YEAR 1625 TO THE YEAR 1635.

CHARLES succeeded his father on the 27th of March, 1625: Parliament was assembled on the 18th of June following, and the first statute it passed was directed against the performance of interludes and common plays on Sunday. The clause of the act is thus worded:—"That from and after forty 'days, next after the end of this Session of Parliament, 'there shall be no meetings, assemblies, or concourse 'of people out of their own parishes on the Lord's 'day within this realm, or any of the dominions there-'of, for any sports or pastimes whatsoever, nor any 'bear-baiting, interludes, common plays, or other un-'lawful exercises or pastimes used by any person or 'persons within their own parishes; and that every 'person and persons offending in any of the premises 'shall forfeit for every offence three shillings and four-'pence.' Thus bear-baiting, interludes, and common plays were forbidden entirely on Sunday, but other lawful sports and pastimes were permitted, provided the persons present belonged to the parish in which they took place*. A. D. 1625.

* It was followed by the 3 Car. I. c. 2, to prevent the profanation of

Notwithstanding this inauspicious commencement, which, in truth, was only enforcing the previous orders of the Privy Council by the authority of an Act of Parliament, Charles showed himself in the outset of his reign well disposed to encourage plays and players. The plague made its appearance in London in June, with so much malignity, that on the 19th of that month it was deemed expedient to adjourn Trinity Term: nevertheless, on the 24th of June, Charles renewed to his company of comedians the royal licence which had been conceded by his father, including the clause, first introduced in March, 1619-20, providing that they should not perform in the metropolis until the number of persons infected should not exceed forty in the week. I add the names of the players as they stand in the patent, to shew by comparison, those who had died or retired or had been added in the interval between 1620 and 1625: they were in the latter year:—

John Hemmings,
Henry Condell,
John Lowen,
Joseph Taylor,
Richard Robinson,
Robert Benfield,
John Shancks,
William Rowley,
John Rice,
Elliard Swanston,
George Birch,
Richard Sharpe, and
Thomas Pollard.

the Lord's-day by carriers, waggoners, carters, wainmen, butchers, and drovers, who had hitherto travelled on Sunday without molestation.

The principal names wanting in this list are those of Richard Burbage, who was dead, and Nathaniel Field, who had, probably, quitted the stage, as we find no later trace of him. Hemmings and Condell, who had jointly published the first folio of Shakespeare's plays in 1623, had both ceased to act in 1625, but they were still considered members of the company, although Joseph Taylor, whose name comes fourth in the list, was, in one instance at least, looked upon by persons in authority as the head of the King's servants. The patent of Charles, from the original in the Rolls, is inserted in a note *.

* It is also in Rymer's *Fœdera*, xviii. p. 120.

'*De Concessione specialis Licentiæ Johanni Hemings et aliis.*

'Charles by the grace of God, &c. To all Justices, Maiors, Sher-
'riffes, Constables, Headboroughes, and other our officers and loving
'subjects greeting. Know ye that Wee of our especiall grace, cer-
'tayne knowledge, and meere motion have licensed and authorized, and
'by these presents do licence and authorize, our welbeloved servants
'John Hemings, Henry Condall, John Lowen, Joseph Taylor,
'Richard Robinson, Robert Benefeild, John Shanck, William Rowley,
'John Rice, Elliart Swanston, George Birch, Richard Sharpe, and
'Thomas Pollard, and the rest of their associates, freely to use and
'exercise the art and facultye of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories,
'Enterludes, Morralls, Pastoralls, Stage Playes and such other like as
'they have already studied, or hereafter shall use or study, as well for
'the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure
'when we shall think good to see them, during our pleasure; and the
'said Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Enterludes, Moralls, Pastoralls,
'Stage Playes and such like to shew and exercise publiquely, or other-
'wise, to the best commoditie when the infection of the Plague shall not
'weekely exceede the nomber of forty, by the Certificate of the Lord
'Mayor of London for the time being, as well within these two theire

As it was out of the question that either the King's servants, or any other company, should play in London at this date, in consequence of the extent and virulence of the infectious malady, (which first made its appearance in Whitechapel, and continued to rage with unabated fury during the summer and autumn,) most of the performers departed to exercise their 'art and faculty' in the country, which, it will be perceived, the King's servants were permitted to do by the patent they had just obtained: on the 1st of July they also procured the licence of the Master of the Revels for the same purpose*, a course that would seem alto-

'most usuall houses, called the Globe within our County of Surrey, and 'their private House scituate within the precinct of the Black Fryers 'within our Citty of London, as also within any Townehalls, or Moute-'halls, or other convenient places within the Liberties and Freedome of 'any other Citty, university, town, or Borough whatsoever within our 'said Realmes and Dominions: willing and commanding you any every 'of you, and all other our loving subjects, as you tender our pleasure, 'not onely to permit and suffre them herein without any your letts, 'hinderances, or molestations, dureing our said pleasure, but alsoe to 'be aydeing and assisting to them, if any wrong be to them offered, 'and to allow them such former courtesies as have been given to men 'of their place and quality; and also, what further favour you shall 'shew to these our servants, and the rest of their associates for our 'sakes, Wee shall take kindly at your hands. In witness, &c. Witnes 'our selfe at Westmynster, the foure and twenteth day of June.

'Per breve de privato sigillo.'

* Chalmers (Supp. Apol. p. 185), alluding to this circumstance, and not recollecting the cause of the departure of the players from the metropolis, observes upon it, 'It is a curious fact, that at this epoch '(1625), the established companies of London strolled often into the 'country,' and he attributes it to the then 'multiplicity of associated

gether unnecessary. Hemmings, no doubt, did not accompany them, and we know that Condell then resided at Fulham, having completely relinquished the stage as a profession *.

The pestilence did not abate its violence until the end of January, 1625-6 †, and during the whole interval between that month and the preceding June, the actors, who were accustomed to exhibit in London, were driven to procure a scanty and uncertain subsistence in the provinces, where they were not unfrequently ill received, because it was thought that they might be the bearers of infection. As the King's servants were usually required to attend the Court at Christmas, it is probable that they returned to Lon-

'players and the paucity of attractive plays.' The fact is, that the 'established companies of London,' at all times were in the habit of going into the country to perform, especially whenever there was such a degree of sickness in the capital, as induced the public authorities to suspend theatrical representations.

* A printed tract, incidentally connected with the drama, was published by him in 1625, which has hitherto been unnoticed. It is called *The Run-aways Answer to a book called A Rod for Run-aways*, justifying those who had fled from the capital in consequence of the plague, and among the rest the players. He was not the author of it, but it was sent to him with a letter, addressed by persons signing themselves by their initials, B. V., S. O., T. O., A. L., and V. S., to 'our much-respected and worthy friend, Mr. H. Condell, at his country-house in Fulham,' in order that he might procure it to be printed: the letter is dated 'from Oxford and elsewhere, Sept. 10, 1625,' and the body of the tract alludes to the Blackfriars and the Cock-pit playhouses, but it contains no distinct intelligence regarding the then condition of the stage.

† On the 29th January, a general thanksgiving was offered up, because at that date the number of deaths was considerably decreased.

don, or its vicinity, shortly before that season in order to be in readiness. It might be concluded that the body would be in no very flourishing circumstances, even if we had no evidence upon the point; but so ill were the players furnished to discharge their duties to their royal master, that the King found it necessary (perhaps on the representation of the Master of the Revels) to grant them a Privy Seal with a gift of 100 marks, in order that they might provide themselves with apparel. This document (preserved at the Chapter-house) is, I believe, the first of its kind extant, and as a proof of the encouragement Charles was desirous of extending to the stage, we may quote this instance of 'princely bounty.'

'By the King.

'Right trusty and right well-beloved Cousin and 'Councellor, we greet you well, and will and com-'mand you, that, under our Privy Seal, you cause our 'letters to be addressed forth in form following:— 'Charles by the grace of God &c. To the Trea-'surer and Undertreasurer of our Exchequer greeting. 'Whereas we have been pleased to bestow upon the 'Company of our Players, who are to attend us daily 'at our Court this Christmas, the sum of one hundred 'marks for the better furnishing them with apparel: 'We do hereby will and command you, of our trea-'sure in the receipt of our Exchequer, to cause present 'payment to be made unto Joseph Taylor, gent., one 'of the said company, of the said sum of one hundred 'marks, to the use of himself and the rest of his com-

'pany of players, as of our free gift and princely 'bounty, for provision of apparel as aforesaid, without 'accompt, imprest, or other charge to be set upon 'them, or any of them, for the same or any part 'thereof. And these our letters, &c. Given, &c. 'And these our letters shall be your sufficient war-'rant and discharge in this behalf. Given under our 'Signet at our honor of Hampton Court, the thirtieth 'day of December in the first year of our reign.

'Fra. Galle.'

Six months, therefore, after the date of the Royal licence to the King's servants, Hemmings and Condell being at the head of the list, they are spoken of expressly as the company of Joseph Taylor: the 100 marks are to be delivered to him 'to the use of himself and the rest of *his* company,' without any mention of Hemmings and Condell. It is not unlikely, therefore, that they had seceded from any active share in the management on the breaking out of the plague, and the consequent closing of the Globe; but nevertheless, we afterwards find Hemmings entering into arrangements for them with the Master of the Revels, with whom, perhaps, from his long connection, he had a more ready and influential communication than the rest of his former associates*.

* The following quotations upon this point are from the Office-book of Sir H. Herbert.

'17 July, 1626. From Mr. Hemmings, for a courtesie done him about their Blackfriars hous, 3*l*.

'From Mr. Hemming, in their company's name, to forbid the playing

The Privy Seal for the issue of 100 marks bears date after Christmas-day, and the performances of plays, if any, (of which we have no information from Sir H. Herbert, who notices no court revels separately and distinctly after 1624,) took place upon Twelfth-day and at Shrovetide. It was unquestionably intended that a Mask should be exhibited at Christmas, 1625-6, because on the 19th Dec. 1626. Michael Oldsworth was allowed a warrant for 300*l.*, 'on account of a Mask the Queen intends to have performed at Christmas.' No production of the kind, exhibited on this occasion, is extant.

A. D.

It will not be out of its place here, to annex some account of the musical establishment of Charles I., at the opening of his reign. I am enabled to do so by a Privy Seal, which exempted all the musicians belonging to the Court from the payment of subsidies: it bears date on the 20th December, 1625, and hence we learn that the King then had in his pay

8 Players on the Hautboys and Sackbuts,
6 Players on the Flute,
6 Players on Recorders,
11 Players on Violins, including Thomas Lupo, who is termed 'Composer,'
6 Players on Lutes,
4 Players on Viols,

'of Shakespeare's plays to the Red Bull Company, this 11th April, '1627, 5*l.*'

It will be observed also in 1631, that he was still treated as the leader of the Company.

1 Player on the Harp,
1 Keeper of the Organs, and
15 Musicians for the Lutes and Voices *.

* Their names were the following:—

Musicians for the Hautboys and Sackbuts.
And. Bassano,
Sam. Garsh,
Jno. Snowesman,
Jerome Lanier,
Tho. Mason,
Rich. Blagrave,
Jacobi Troches,
Edw. Harding.

Musicians for the Flutes.
James Harding,
Peter Guy,
Innocent Lanier,
Andrea Lanier,
Nich. Guy,
Will. Noak.

Musicians for Recorders.
Jerome Bassano,
Rob. Baker,
Clement Lanier,
Jno. Hussey,
Antonio Bassano,
Rob. Baker, jun.

Musicians for the Violins.
Cæsar Galiardetto,
Tho. Lupo,
Ant. Coney,
Alex. Chisham,
Tho. Warre2,
Hor. Lupo,
Jno. Harding,

Musicians for the Violins.
Leonard Mell,
Jno. Hopper,
Adrian Valett,
Tho. Lupo, (composer).

Musicians for the Lutes.
Nich. Lanier,
Rob. Jonson,
Timothy Collins,
Maurice Webster,
John Dowland,
Tho. Warwick.

Musicians for the Violls.
Alph. Ferabosco,
Dan. Ferrant,
Roger Mayer,
John Friend.

Musician for the Harp.
Philip Squier.

Keeper of the Organs.
Edw. Norgate.

Musicians for the Lutes & Voices.
John Caprario,
John Daniel,
Tho. Ford,
Rob. Taylor,
John Drew,
John Lanier,
Edw. Wormall,
Jonas Wrench,
John Coggeshall,
John Ballard,

In the whole, fifty-eight persons, exclusive of Serjeant Trumpeters, Trumpeters, Drummers and Fifers. The 'Musicians for the Lutes and Voices,' probably, consisted of the Gentlemen and the Children of the Chapel. With regard to their salaries, this instrument could not be expected to furnish any information; but by another Privy Seal, dated 20th January, 1625-6, it appears that Jerome Lanier, and his son William Lanier, who are termed 'Players on the Sackbuts,' were allowed wages at the rate of 20*d.* per day, besides 16*l.* 2*s.* for livery. In the next year Anthony Robert was appointed 'a Musician,' with a salary of 40*l.* per annum.

At this period we find Sir H. Herbert treated by the Crown as Master of the Revels, and as if he discharged the duties of the place in his own right, although he was still only the deputy of Sir J. Astley. He is called 'Master of our Revels' in a Privy Seal, dated the 7th of November, 1626, by which it was ordered, that 200*l.* be paid to him for expenses of his department; and farther, that from thenceforward the Treasurer and under-Treasurer of the Exchequer should deliver to him yearly, such sums as should to them seem meet for the provision of necessaries for the Revels*. Here again, it may be

Musicians for the Lutes & Voices.	*Musicians for the Lutes & Voices.*
John Lawrence,	Robert March,
Rich. Dering,	Angelo Notary.
Alphonso ——,	

* The instrument runs as follows: it is subjoined as the first of the kind issued by Charles I.:—

remarked, that Charles went beyond the precedents of his predecessors, who never left it to the discretion of the chief officers of the Exchequer to decide how much ought, or ought not, to be expended upon court amusements.

We have already seen, that in 1620 a patent had been incautiously granted to John Cotton, John Williams, and Thomas Dixon, for the construction of an amphitheatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which being recalled, the Solicitor General was ordered to draw up a new warrant, in less objectionable terms, and granting more limited privileges. No such warrant was prepared, and by documents in the State Paper Office we learn, that in the summer of 1626 Williams and Dixon (for Cotton does not then appear in the trans-

'BY THE KING.

'Right trustie and right welbeloved, &c. Whereas we are informed 'by our trustie and welbeloved servant, Sir Henry Herbert, Knight, M^r 'of our Revells, that there are divers things necessarily to be provided 'for that office for our use and service. These are to will and commaund 'you, out of such our treasure as is nowe remayning in the receipt of 'our Exchequer, upon receipt hereof, to imprest to the said M^r of our 'Revells, or his assignes, the somme of two hundred pounds, the same 'to be by him imployed about provision of necessaries for the same, 'whereof he is to yeeld an accompt. And further, we will and com-'maund you from time to time yeerely, to imprest unto the said Sir 'Henry Herbert, now M^r of our Revells, such somme and sommes of 'money to be by him expended about the provisions of necessaries for 'our said Revells, as to you shall seeme meete and convenient for pro-'visions of the said office. And theis our letters, &c. Given, &c. at 'our Pallace of Westminster, the 7th Nov. in the second yeare of our 'raigne.

'WINDEBANK.'

action) renewed their application, apparently with the hope of better success from a King, who had shown himself strongly attached to theatrical amusements. A 'Bill' was prepared for the purpose, and it was sent for perusal to Lord Keeper Coventry, for his opinion upon the fitness of complying with the request: he reported favourably upon the undertaking in the first instance, as is evident from the following letter, copied from the original, which he addressed to Lord Conway: the document is headed, 'The Lo. Keeper to the Lord Conway, touching the Amphitheatre.'

'My very good Lord.

'I have perused this Bill, and do call to mynd that 'about three or four yeres past, when I was Atturney 'Generall, a patent for an Amphitheater was in hand 'to have passed, but upon this sodain, without serch 'of my papers, I cannot give your lordship any ac- 'count of the true cause wherefore it did not passe, 'nor whether that and this do varie in substans: neither 'am I apt upon a sodain to take impertinent excep- 'tions to any thing that is to passe, much less to a 'thing that is recommended by so good a friend. 'But if upon perusall of my papers, which I had 'while I was Atturney, or upon more serious thoughts, 'I shall observe any thing worthy to be represented 'to his Matie or to the Counsail, I shall then acquaint 'your Lordship; and in the meane tyme I would be 'loth to be the author of a motion to his Matie to 'stay it: but if you fynd his Matie att fit^ting leasure 'to move him, that he will give leave to thinke of it

'in this sort as I have written, it may do well, and I 'assure your lordship, unlesse I fynd matter of more 'consequens then I observe on this sodain, it is not 'like to be stayed. And so I rest

'Yr lordship's very assured
'to do you service,
'Tho. Coventrye, Ch.

'Canbury, 12 August, 1626.'

Whatever might be the cause of the change in the Lord Chancellor's opinion, whether it arose from a more deliberate perusal of the bill, or from earnest remonstrances of other companies of players*, which no doubt must have been made, it is certain, that about a month after the date of this letter he wrote another communication to Lord Conway, in which he took strong exceptions to the proposed new patent, representing that it went much beyond the grant which had been sought from King James, and which, after having been made, was recalled. Lord Chancellor Coventry's letter is indorsed by Lord Conway in these words:— 'that it is unfitt the graunt for the Amphitheatre should

* Shakerley Marmion, in his Holland's Leaguer, 1632, refers to this very scheme, and to the injury that it threatened to the Companies of Players: he puts the following lines into the mouth of Agurtes, 'an impostor' and a projector.

'Twill dead all my device in making matches,
'My plots of architecture, and erecting
'New amphitheatres, to draw custom
'From play-houses once a week, and so pull
'A curse upon my head from the poor scoundrels.'

Act II. Scene 3.

'passe.' It is as follows, the original being likewise deposited in the State Paper Office.

'My Lord.

'According to his Māties good pleasure, which I 'receaved from your lordship, I have considered of 'the graunt desired by John Williams and Thomas 'Dixon, for building an Amphitheater in Lincolns 'Inne fields, and comparing it with that which was 'propounded in king James his tyme, doe finde much 'difference betweene them: for that former was in- 'tended principally for martiall exercises, and extraor- 'dinary shewes and solemnyties for Ambassadors and 'persons of honour and quality, with a cessation from 'other shews and sports for one daie in a moneth 'onlie, upon 14 daies warning: wheras by this new 'graunt I see little probability of any thing to be used 'but common plaies, or ordinary sports, now used or 'shewed at the Beare-garden or the common Play- 'houses about London, for all sorts of beholders, with 'a restraint to all other plaies and shewes, for one day 'in the weeke upon two daies warning: with liberty to 'erect their buildings in Lincolns Inne Fields, where 'there are too many buildings already; and which 'place, in the late King's tyme, upon a petition ex- 'hibited by the Princes comedians for setting up a 'play-house there, was certified by eleven Justices of 'peace, under their hands, to be very inconvenyent. 'And therefore, not holding this new graunt fitt to 'passe, as being no other in effect but to translate the 'play-houses and Beare-garden from the Bankside to

'a place much more unfitt, I thought fitt to give your 'Lordship these reasons for it, wherewithall you may 'please to acquaint his Mātie, if there shalbe cause. 'And so remayne

'Yr lordship's very assured frende
'to doe you service,
'Tho. Coventrye, Ch.

'Canbury, 28 Sept. 1626.
'Lo. Conway.'

Hence, among other points, we learn, notwithstanding the representation of Taylor, the water-poet, in 1612, that all the companies but the King's servants had left the Bank-side, that in 1626 more than one theatre was open there, besides the Bear-garden*, where plays were also occasionally performed. These players and others had doubtless petitioned the court against the

* The Globe is mentioned by name in the following extract from the Register of the Privy Council, dated 25th May, 1626. It is 'a letter to the Justices of the Peace of the county of Surrey.'

'Whereas we are informed that on Thursday next, divers loose and 'idle persons, some sailors and others, have appointed to meete at the 'Play-house called the Globe, to see a play (as is pretended), but their 'end is thereby to disguise some routous and riotous action, we have 'therefore thought fit to give you notice of the information which we 'have received concerning this their purpose. And do likewise hereby 'will and require you to take very careful and strict order, that no play be 'acted on that day, and also to have that strength about you as you 'shall think sufficient for the suppressing of any insolencies, or other 'mutinous intentions that you shall perceive, and to take with you the 'Under Sheriff of that county for the further assisting you, if there be 'cause. And so not doubting your care herein, we, &c.'

concession of a licence that must have been so prejudicial to their interests.

On the 20th of August of this year, Nathaniel Giles, who is styled 'Doctor of Music,' and who was at the head of the children of the Chapel, obtained a new warrant under the Privy Seal, for taking up singing boys 'in all or any cathedral, collegiate church, '&c., for the service of the Chapel Royal,' and it contains a remarkable clause, showing the growth of puritanical opinions at this period, by which the boys, who, from a very early date, had been accustomed occasionally to act plays for the amusement of the court, were prevented from doing so, in consequence of its being, for the first time, thought inconsistent with their religious duties. It is in these words:—'Provided 'always, and we straightly charge and command, that 'none of the said Choristers or Children of the Chap-'pell, soe to be taken by force of this Commission, 'shalbe used or imployed as Comedians or Stage 'Players, or to exercise or acte any stage plaies, inter-'ludes, Comedies or Tragedies; for that it is not fitt or 'desent that such as should sing the praises of God 'Almighty should be trained or imployed in such 'lascivious and prophane exercises.'

The Office-book of Sir Henry Herbert contains no entry of any kind regarding the performance of Masks and plays at court, at Christmas and Twelfth-tide, 1626-7; but 800*l.* were issued from the Exchequer to Edmund Taverner, Esq., for preparations, in two warrants for 400*l.* each, the one dated on

A. D. 1626.

the 24th of November, and the other on the 27th of December. Probably two Masks were represented, one on Twelfth-night and the other at Shrovetide*: the first, we know, was Ben Jonson's *Fortunate Isles*, which, though written after the author had received a stroke of the palsy, seems to have been highly approved: it was the first work he had produced for Charles, and it was employed as an introduction to a repetition of *Neptune's Triumph*, which had been represented before James at Christmas, 1623-4, and which, as Mr. Gifford has observed†, had much pleased the present King, when Prince of Wales, just after his return from Spain, and the breaking off the match with the Infanta. A copy of one of the original Privy Seals on this occasion is subjoined in a note, and that subsequently issued for a like sum follows nearly the same form‡.

* This was usually called the Queen's Mask, and part of the expense remained unpaid for more than ten years. On the 8th of May, 1638, a Privy Seal was granted to Charles Gentile, Embroiderer, for 1630*l.*, for 'embroidering done to the Queen's Mask in 1627.' Two other sums of 1631*l.* and 1674*l.* are included in the same instrument for embroidering two state beds.

† Ben Jonson's Works, viii. 64.

‡ 'BY THE KING.

'Right trustie and right well beloved Cousin and Councellor, &c. 'Charles by the grace of God, &c. Wee will and commaund you, out 'of treasure remaining in the receipt of our Exchequer, forthwith to paie 'or cause to be paied unto our trustie and well beloved Edmund 'Taverner, Esq, the some of foure hundred poundes, to bee disbursed 'by him for necessary provisions, to bee made and used in the Maske 'of our deerest Consort Queene Marye, shortly to be performed: the

The only circumstance relating to the common playhouses in 1627, is a fact previously noticed, but which deserves especial remark, inasmuch as it proves the popularity of Shakespeare's plays at that date, although at court, two or three years earlier, the productions of Fletcher seem to have been preferred. This preference may be partly accounted for on the score of greater novelty; but, with the public, Shakespeare was so great a favourite, that in April, 1627, the interference of the Master of the Revels was purchased by the King's company, then playing at Blackfriars, at the expense of 5*l.*, to prevent the players of the large theatre, called the Red Bull, from performing the dramas of Shakespeare*. The exhibitions at the Fortune and Cockpit (and perhaps at some other theatre on the Bankside, besides the Globe), as far as we can learn, were carried on without interruption.

Prior to January, 1627-8, the cost of the Revels, notwithstanding the regular issue of large sums from the Exchequer under the authority of Privy Seals, had been so great, that in the four preceding years, a debt of 757*l.* 12*s.* 10*d.* had been incurred to the Master, and other officers, for provisions and necessaries, besides salaries and wages. On the 2nd of

'same to bee taken to him, or his assignes, without accompt imprest
'or other chardge to bee sett upon him, his executors, or assignes for
'the same, or for anie parte thereof. And these our letters shall be, &c.
'Given under our signet, at our pallace of Westminster, the 24th day
'of November, in the second yeere of our raigne.

'WINDEBANK.'

* See the particular entry by Sir H. Herbert, in p. 7 of this vol.

January, therefore, a warrant was issued by the King for the payment of that sum, which, in the instrument, is divided into the subsequent items, without further specification:—53*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, 126*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, 105*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, 30*l.* 4*s.* 10*d.*, and 407*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* These amounts, it was directed, should forthwith be delivered to the Master of the Revels, who was to distribute them among the several claimants in his department.

Three warrants were issued for Masks at court at Christmas and Shrovetide: one, dated 2nd of January, 1627-8, for 150*l.* to Edmund Taverner, Esq. for 'a Mask to be presented on twelfth-night next;' another, dated the 30th of the same month, to Lord Compton, Gentleman of the Robes, for '500*l.* upon accompt for eight masking suits for 'our service, in a Mask which shortly is to be pre-'sented;' and the third, dated 11th of February following, to Edmund Taverner, Esq., for 600*l.* 'toward 'the expence of a Mask to be presented shortly before 'us at Whitehall.' The second of these Privy Seals (all preserved in the Chapter-house) was for an unusual charge, the dresses being generally included among the other provisions, and it is most likely that they were intended for the same exhibition as that to which the 600*l.*, issued to Taverner, was to be devoted. We are without information what poet was employed. A. D. 1628.

Players, who, at a very early date, called themselves the servants of any particular nobleman, wore his badge or livery, and thus secured the protection they

needed*. We have clear evidence in 1629, that each A. D. of the King's players was allowed, every second 1629. year, four yards of bastard scarlet for a cloak, and a quarter of a yard of crimson velvet for a cape to it; and it is asserted in the document establishing this fact, that such had been the usual allowance†.

* By the account of the expenses of the Duke of Norfolk, in the reign of Henry VII., it appears that his players were provided by him with doublets. When Tucca, in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1602, offers to take certain players into his 'service,' he bargains with them that they 'shall buy their own cloth,' besides giving him 'two shares for his countenance.'

† It was published by Malone (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 60), from a MS. he discovered in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, to whom it was addressed. Hemmings is still found at the head of the King's Company (for the names of all the players entitled to the allowance are inserted), then consisting of thirteen members. The document is as follows:—

'These are to signify unto your Lordship his Majesty's pleasure 'that you cause to be delivered unto his Majesty's players, whose 'names follow, viz. John Hemmings, John Lowen, Joseph Taylor, 'Richard Robinson, John Shank, Robert Benfield, Richard Sharp, 'Eliard Swanson, Thomas Pollard, Anthony Smith, Thomas Hobbes, 'William Pen, George Vernon and James Horne, to each of them the 'several allowance of four yards of bastard scarlet for a cloake, and a 'quarter of a yard of crimson velvet for the capes, it being the usual 'allowance granted unto them by his Majesty every second year, and 'due at Easter last past. For the doing whereof these shall be your 'warrant. May 6th, 1629.'

According to the list of 'the names of such as acted' in Forde's *Lovers' Melancholy*, produced on the 24th of November, 1628, Curteise Grivill, Richard Baxter, John Tomson, John Honyman, William Trigg and Alex. Gough also belonged to the company of the King's players. Perhaps they were 'hired men,' and were not entitled to liveries. Robinson and Hobbes, mentioned above, did not act in that play.

Malone states, that in the year 1629 a new playhouse was constructed in Whitefriars, which was afterwards called the Salisbury-court Theatre, and he was of opinion that it was not built upon the site of the old Whitefriars playhouse *. We have already seen that in 1613 a project was on foot, and possibly carried into execution, 'for erecting a new playhouse in the Whitefriars.' If so, after 1629 there were two theatres in Whitefriars, which does not seem likely, unless that supposed to have been built in 1613 had not been constructed, or was shut up, or unless the new theatre of 1629 were raised in its stead, upon a larger scale, and on the same foundation. The information regarding the building of the new theatre in 1629 is very defective; but the fact is confirmed by Prynne, who, in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to his *Histriomastix*, 1633, mentions that 'a new theatre' had been then recently 'erected' in Whitefriars. It seems, in the first instance, to have been occupied by the Children of the King's Revels, and very shortly afterwards by the players of Prince Charles, who acted Marmyon's *Holland's Leaguer* there prior to 1632, when it was printed with the following list of actors belonging to the company:—

'William Browne,
'Ellis Worth,
'Andrew Keyne, or Cane,
'Matthew Smith,
'James Sneller,
'Henry Gradwell,

* Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 52.

'Thomas Bond,
'Richard Fowler,
'Edward May,
'Robert Huyt,
'Robert Stafford,
'Richard Godwin,
'John Wright,
'Richard Fouch,
'Arthur Savill,
'Samuel Mannery.'

The six last performed the female characters in the comedy, which, without doubling the parts, required a strong company.

The year 1629 is to be marked as the first date at which any attempt was made in this country to introduce female performers on the public stage. In France and Italy the practice had long prevailed, and the experiment was tried here, though without success, by a company of French comedians at the Blackfriars Theatre. On the 4th of November, 1629, as appears by his office-book, Sir H. Herbert received 2*l.* as his fee 'for the allowing of a French company to play a farce at Blackfriars,' but it is not upon his authority we learn, that at least part of the company consisted of women. In Prynne's *Histriomastix** is inserted a marginal note in these words:—'Some French-women, 'or monsters rather, in Michaelmas term 1629 at-'tempted to act a French play at the playhouse in 'Blackfriars, an impudent, shameful, unwomanish, 'graceless, if not more than whorish attempt.' Malone seems to have doubted if this 'attempt' were not

* 1633, p. 414.

successful; and he quotes a further passage from the same author, where he says* 'they had such French-'women actors in a play, not long since personated in 'Blackfriars playhouse, to which there was a great 'resort.' It does not follow, because there was great resort to the theatre on the night when the French actresses first appeared, that therefore the attempt succeeded. The contrary is certainly the fact, as might be inferred from the evidence of Sir H. Herbert, which I shall notice presently, and as may be seen by the following extract from a private letter, written by a person of the name of Thomas Brande, which I discovered among some miscellaneous papers in the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth. It does not appear to whom it was addressed, but probably to Laud while Bishop of London, and it bears date on the 8th November, fixing the very day when the female performers made their first appearance in England. After giving some other information, Brande proceeds as follows.

'Furthermore you should know, that last daye 'certaine vagrant French players, who had beene 'expelled from their owne contrey, and those women, 'did attempt, thereby giving just offence to all ver-'tuous and well-disposed persons in this town, to act 'a certain lascivious and unchaste comedye, in the 'French tonge at the Black-fryers. Glad I am to 'saye they were hissed, hooted, and pippin-pelted from

* Histriomastix, 1633, p. 215.

'the stage, so as I do not thinke they will soone be 'ready to trie the same againe.—Whether they had 'licence for so doing I know not, but I do know that 'if they had licence, it were fit that the Master [of the 'Revels] be called to account for the same.'—

Brande was mistaken in his supposition, that the ill-reception of the French ladies at Blackfriars would deter them from renewing their attempt elsewhere; but they allowed at least a fortnight to elapse before they again appeared, and then at a different theatre—the Red Bull. The following appears in his book, in the handwriting of Sir H. Herbert.

'For allowinge of the Frenche at the Red Bull for 'a daye, 22d of Nov. 1629.'

The sum he received is not inserted, but it is observable, that the permission required only extended to a single day, in anticipation, perhaps, that the actresses would not be allowed to appear again. More than three weeks elapsed before they ventured once more to face an English audience, when they chose the Fortune playhouse, having no doubt failed at the Red Bull on the 22d Nov. as they had done at the Blackfriars on the 7th Nov. Of this third permission, also only for one day, we meet with the subsequent entry by the Master of the Revels.

'For allowinge of a French companie att the For-'tune to play one afternoone, this 14 day of Decem-'ber, 1629—£1.'

Sir H. Herbert bears positive testimony to the little success they met with on this occasion, in a memoran-

dum subjoined to the preceding entry:—'I should 'have had another piece, but in respect of their ill 'fortune I was content to bestow a piece back;' so that he returned half his fee on a subsequent representation of the unprofitableness of the speculation.

It has been asserted, both by Malone and Chalmers, that Sir H. Herbert, in conjunction with Simon Thelwall, Esq. obtained, in 1629, the reversion of the office of Master of the Revels on the deaths of Sir J. Astley, and Ben Jonson: the first says, that the grant was dated on the 22nd August, and the last that it was dated on the 12th August. It is not a point of any moment, but they are both mistaken, as the Privy Seal (which is among the records in the Chapter House) bears date from Bagshot on the 13th August, 5 Charles I. It is in the ordinary form, and contains no information beyond the fact, that both Sir J. Astley, who held the appointment, and Ben Jonson, who had the next reversion, were *superstites, ac in plena vita existunt* *. A. D. 1630.

Notwithstanding his infirmities, Ben Jonson produced two masks for Christmas 1630-1; one for the king, called *Love's Triumph through Callipolis;* and the other for the Queen, under the title of *Chloridia:* the first was presented by the A. D. 1631.

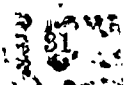
* It was in this year, viz. on the 6th March, 1629-30, after the ill success of his *New Inn*, that Charles raised the pension of Ben Jonson from 100 marks to 100*l.*, adding to it the annual gift of a tierce of Canary. The King had previously sent him a gift of 100*l.*—See *Gifford's Ben Jonson*, I. clv.

Queen and the Ladies of her Court, and the last by the King and certain Lords and Gentlemen. I have not been able to find any warrant showing the expense of these exhibitions *.

On the 11th Jan. 1630-1, we find Sir H. Herbert refusing to license a play by Massinger, the name of which he does not give, 'because (as he states in his 'Register) it did contain dangerous matter, as the 'deposing of Sebastian King of Portugal, by Philip 'the [2nd], and there being a peace sworn 'twixt the 'Kings of England and Spain.' This anecdote serves to prove the extent to which caution was carried at this date: Sir H. Herbert adds, by way of asserting his right—'I had my fee notwithstanding, which 'belongs to me for reading it over, and ought to be 'brought always with a book.' This was establishing a new claim, as the fee had been heretofore paid for licensing, and not for refusing to license a play.

How popular the performances of the King's servants continued at the Blackfriars theatre in 1631, may be judged from the following petition presented to Laud, Bishop of London, and thus indorsed with

* On the 4th January, 1630-1, a warrant was issued under the Privy Seal for reducing the 'board wages' of the establishment of the Chapel Royal, in order that the whole might be placed upon a more economical footing. By this document (in the Chapter-House Westminster) 10*l.* per ann. were allowed to thirty-three gentlemen of the Chapel, and to the Serjeant of the Vestuary—Two yeomen were allowed 6*d.* per day, a third yeoman and the groom 4*d.* per day, and 4*d.* per day to the twelve children of the chapel. The whole charge for board-wages was calculated at 443*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* per annum.



his own hand:—'1631. The Petition of the inha-
'bitants of the Blackfryars, about remove of the
'Players. To the Coun. Table.' It ran in these terms:—

'To the right Honble and right Reverend father in
'God, William Lord Bisp of London, one of his
'Ma^ts^ honble privy Councell.

'The humble petition of the Churchwardens and
'Constables of Blackfriers, on the behalfe of the
'whole Parish.

'Shewing,

'That by reason of a Playhouse, exceedingly
'frequented, in the Precinct of the said Blackfriers, the
'inhabitants there suffer many grievances upon the
'inconveniences hereunto annexed, and many other.

'May it therefore please your Lordship to take the
'said grievances into your honble consideration for
'redressing thereof. And for the reviving the order,
'which hath beene heretofore made by the Lords of
'the Councell, and the Lord Maior and Court of
'Aldermen, for the removal of them. And they shall
'according to their duties ever pray for your Lord-
'ship.

'Reasons and Inconveniences induceing the Inha-
'bitants of Blackfriers London to become humble
'suitors to your Lordship for removing the Play-
'house in the said Blackfriers.

'1. The ShopKeepers in divers places suffer much,
'being hindered by the great recourse to the Playes
'(especially of Coaches) from selling their commodities,

'and having their wares many tymes broken and beaten 'of their stalles.

'2. The recourse of Coaches is many tymes so 'great, that the inhabitants cannot in an afternoone 'take in any provision of Beere, Coales, Wood or 'Hay, the streetes being knowne to be so exceeding 'straite and narrowe.

'3. The passage through Ludgate to the water is 'many tymes stoppd up, people in their ordinary 'going much endangered, quarrells, and bloodshed 'many tymes occasioned, and many disorderly people 'towards night gathered thither, under pretence of 'attending and waiting for those at the playes.

'4. Yf there should happen any misfortune of fier, 'there is not likely any present order could possibly 'be taken, for the disorder and number of the coaches, 'since there could be no speedy passage made for 'quenching the fyer, to the endangering both of the 'Parish and Cittie.

'5. Christenings and Burialls, which usually are in 'the afternoone, are many tymes disturbed, and persons 'endangered in that part, which is the greatest parte 'of the Parish.

'6. Persons of honour and quality, that dwell in the 'Parish, are restrained by the number of Coaches from 'going out, or coming home, in seasonable tyme, to 'the prejudice of their occasions. And some persons of 'honour have left, and others have refused houses for 'this very inconvenience, to the prejudice and loss of 'the Parish.

'7. The Lords of the Councell in former tymes 'have by order directed, that there shall be but two 'Playhouses tollerated, and those without the Cittie, 'the one at the Banke-side, the other neere Goulding 'Lane (which these Players still have and use all Sum-'mer) which the Lords did signifie by their letters to 'the Lord Maior; and in performance thereof the 'Lord Maior and Court of Aldermen did give order 'that they should forbeare to play any longer there, 'which the Players promised to the Lord Chiefe 'Justice of the Common Pleas (while he was Re-'corder of London) to observe, entreating only a little 'tyme to provide themselves elsewhere.' ,,

This petition was accompanied by several documents of an earlier date, beginning with the construction of the Blackfriars theatre, and coming down to the year 1618, in order to show the steps taken in former times, to abate the nuisance. They have all been noticed in their proper places in the course of these Annals.

From the indorsement of this petition by Laud, we might infer that he had laid it before the Privy Council, but in the registers of that body, which I have carefully examined, I find no trace of any proceedings upon it in 1631. Yet, that something was done might be gathered from the following Privy Seal, in which 100*l.* is given, in one sum, to the King's players 'in regard of their great hinderance;' unless that 'hinderance' were occasioned by the riotous state of

London in the summer, when a most serious disturbance took place in Fleet-street.

'Right trusty and right welbeloved &c. Charles by 'the grace of God &c. To the Treasurer and Under-'treasurer of our Exchequer for the time being greet-'ing. Whereas we have given order, that our servant 'John Heming, and the rest of our Players, shall attend 'upon us and our dearest Consort the Queene at our 'next coming to Hampton Court. And forasmuch as 'we are graciously pleased, in regard of their great 'hinderance of late received, whereby they are disabled 'to attend this service, to bestow upon them the 'somme of one hundred pounds. Wee do hereby will 'and command you, out of our treasure remayning in 'the receipt of our said Exchequer, forthwith to pay 'or cause to be paid unto the said John Heming, for 'himself and the rest of our said servants, the said 'somme of one hundred pounds, as of our free guift and 'bountie, without any accompt imprest or other charge 'to be set upon him or them, or any of them, for the 'same or any part thereof. And these &c. Given 'under our Signet at our Pallace of Westminster, the '20 day of September, in the sixt year of our raigne.

Ex. R. KIRKHAM.'

In the autumn of 1631, a very singular circumstance occurred, connected with the history of the stage: unless the whole story were a malicious invention by some of the many enemies of John Williams, then Bishop of Lincoln, (who previous to his disgrace

had filled the office of Lord Keeper,) he had a play represented in his house in London, on Sunday, September 27th. The piece chosen for this occasion, at least did credit to his taste, for it appears to have been Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* *, and it was got up as a private amusement. The animosity of Laud to Williams is well known, and in the Library at Lambeth Palace is a mass of documents referring to different charges against him, thus indorsed in the hand-writing of Laud himself: 'These 'papers concerning the Bp. of Lincolne wear deli-'vered to me bye his Majesty's command.'' One of these is an admonitory letter from a person of the name of John Spencer, who seems to have been a puritanical preacher, which purports to have been addressed to some lady, not named, who was present on the occasion of the performance of the play, and upon which the following indorsement was made:— 'John Spencer presents the Lord Byshop of Lin-'colne for having a play that night [Sept. 27th, 1631] 'in his house, being the Lord's Day.' It is a curious specimen of puritanical objurgation, and deserves to be printed entire.

'Good Madame.

'It is the rule of the Apostles of our Saviour 'Christ to rebuke not an elder, but exhorte him as a 'father, and the Elderwomen as mothers—1 Thimo.

* One of the actors exhibited himself in an Ass's head, no doubt in the part of Bottom, and in the margin of the document relating to this event, we read the words 'The playe, M. Nights Dr.'

'5. 1. and in the 20th verse: them that synne reprove 'openly that the rest may alsoe feare.' Oh, therefore it 'would please that blessed Lord, the God of wisedome 'to give unto me such grace and wisdome, that I might 'performe this duty to your Ladyship with that due 'regard to your noble quality, and tender cause of 'your precious soule as I ought. But howsoever I 'may faile in pointe of discretion, yet I hope you will 'beare with me, since it proceedes from a harte that 'doth unfainedly desire your everlasting happines, and 'would expose my selfe to your pleasure to prevent 'that which might let and hinder the same. I know 'it is a harde taske, and many tymes a thanklesse office, 'to admonish men of meane quality of their faults, and 'to bring them to acknowledge their errors; much 'more those that are our superiors; but where grace 'and true nobility is, it will teach men to suffer words 'of exhortation with mekenes, and to say with the 'kingly Prophet, Lett the righteous smight mee, for 'that shall be as precious balme unto mee, for the 'wisest and the greatest in this wourld have their frail-'tyes and infirmityes: David, a King, a prophet and 'a man after God's owne harte, yet erred in numbring 'the people, and confessed he had done very folishly; 'and Solomon his sonne, the wisest and the greatest 'statesman that ever was upon the earth, yett erred 'greatly; and although he provided himselfe men 'singers and women singers, and the delights of the 'sonnes of men, yet he doth acknowledge all was but 'vanity and vexation of speritt. And soe I trust

'your noble harte will tell you; though you were 'drawne with the Bishopps coach to his house to heare 'such excellent musicke, such rare conceits, and to see 'such curious actors, and such a number of people to 'behold the same, yett all was but vanity and vex-'ation of spiritt; and the more vanity, the more 'vexation of speritt, because it was upon the Lords-'day, which should have been taken upp with better 'meditations, and contemplations of heaven and hea-'venly things. And therefore, that this maye not prove 'a precedente unto others, I beseech you submitt your 'selfe to this censure that is passed against you, that 'soe it may appeare to the wourld, that though you 'were drawne into this errore, yett you will not stande 'out in it, but give glory unto God, and yield obedience 'unto all good lawes, that soe you may stopp the 'mouthes of many people, which proclaime such liberty, 'from this example to followe their pleasures uppon 'the Saboth day. But, I trust, when they doe heare 'that such persons are questioned and censured for 'beholding such vanity, it will bee a great danting and 'discouragement unto them, and a meanes to repaire 'the breache, wherein otherwise wholle troopes of 'people will venture to violate the Lords sacred day. 'Even so, beseeching the Lord God of Sabboth, that 'my councell may be as wholesome and acceptable unto 'you as the councell of Abigail was unto David, that 'you might say with that holy man, Blessed be the 'Lord God of Israell that hath sente thee to meete 'mee, and blessed be thy councell, and blessed bee

'thou, which hath kept mee from giving any counte-
'nance or incoragement to any that presumes to pro-
'faine the Saboth of the Great God, of Heaven.
'Amen, Lord Jesus, Amen.

'John Spencer.

'November 10, 1631.'

To whom this ebullition of puritanical piety was addressed, as has been remarked, does not appear; but it was probably sent, either to Lady Montagu, or to Lady Headsey, both of whom are mentioned in the subsequent document, which is appended to the letter, and which purports to be a copy of an order, or decree, made by a self-constituted court among the Puritans, for the censure and punishment of offences of the kind.

'A Copie of the order, or decree (*ex officio Comisarii generalis*) John Spencer.

'Forasmuch as this Cõurte hath beene informed, by
'Mr. Comisary general, of a greate misdemenor com-
'mitted in the house of the right honorable Lo.
'Bishopp of Lincolne, by entertaining into his house
'divers Knights and Ladyes, with many other house-
'holders servants, uppon the 27th Septembris, being
'the Saboth day, tõ see a playe or tragidie there acted,
'which began aboute tenn of the clocke at night, and
'ended about two or three of the clocke in the morn-
'ing:

'Wee doe therefore order, and decree, that the Rt.

'honorable John, Lord Bishopp of Lincolne, shall, for 'his offence, erect a free schoole in Eaton, or else at 'greate Staughton, and endowe the same with 20*l.* 'per ann. for the maintenance of the schoolmaster for 'ever.

'Likewise wee doe order, that Sr. Sydney Mountagu, Knight, for his offence, shall give to the poore 'of Huntingdon 5*l.*; and his lady, for her offence, 'five blacke gownes to 5 poore widdowes, uppon 'Newyeares day next.

'Likewise wee doe order, that Sr. Thomas Headsey, 'Knight, for his offence, shall give unto the poore of 'Brampton 5*l.*; and his lady, for her offence, blacke 'cloath gownes to 5 poore, uppon Newyeares day 'nexte.

'Likewise wee doe order, that Mr. Williams, Mr. 'Trye, Mr. Harding, Mr. Hazarde, and Mr. Hulton 'shall eche one of them give a blacke coate, and 5*s.* in 'money, unto 5 poore in Bugden, uppon newyeares 'day nexte.

'Likewise wee doe order, that Mr. Wilson, because 'hee was a speciall plotter and contriver of this busi'ness, and did in such a brutishe manner acte the 'same with an Asses head, and therefore hee shall, 'uppon Tuisday next, from 6 of the clocke in the 'morning till six of the clocke at night, sitt in the 'Porters Lodge at my Lords Bishopps House, with 'his feete in the stocks, and attyred with his asse 'head, and a bottle of hay sett before him, and this 'subscription on his breast:

'Good people I have played the beast,
'And brought ill things to passe:.
'I was a man, but thus have made
'My selfe a silly Asse.'*

Regarding this remarkable, and hitherto unnoticed, incident we are without any further information.

We have evidence that the Blackfriars theatre (and probably others) was open in Decr. 1631, but this was considerably posterior to the date of the Privy Seal last quoted. In an account of the expenses of Sir Humphrey Mildmay of Danbury † (which affords some new and rather curious information regarding plays and players at this period, and subsequently), beginning Jan. 1630-1, I find the following items:—

		s.	d.
21 Jan. 1630-1.	To a play with Sir Fra. Worteley . . .	0	2	6
26 April 1631.	To the Spanish Bawde	0	2	6
2 Nov. 1631.	To a play .	0	1	6
22 Dec. 1631.	To a play at the bl. fryers	0	1	0

'The Spanish Bawd' was, perhaps, not a play which was acted, but a translation from the Spanish, by Thomas Mabbe, of a drama in twenty-one acts, which was printed in 1631, and the price of which might be two shillings and six-pence. If so, there is no entry in this account-book of any playhouse having been visited by Sir H. Mildmay in 1631, between January and

* It is fit that I should express my acknowledgments to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, for an opportunity of inspecting various MSS. in his Library, which were readily placed in my hands by the kindness of the Rev. Dr. D'Oyly.

† Harl. MSS., 554.

November. Perhaps, during a considerable part of this interval the playhouses were closed.

Whether any, and what tragedies and comedies were performed at Court at Christmas 1631-2, A. D. we have no evidence, either from the office- 1632. book of Sir H. Herbert, or other sources. We learn from a letter of John Pory to Sir Thomas Puckering, dated Jan. 12, 1631-2*, that Aurelian Townshend, who had been steward to Lord Salisbury, was the author of the King's Mask, presented on the Sunday after Twelfth-night: it was called *Albion's Triumph*. According to the same authority, Ben Jonson was not employed 'by reason of the predominant power 'of his antagonist, Inigo Jones, who this time twelve-'month was angry with him, for putting his own 'name before his in the title-page' of *Chloridia*. Pory also states that the Queen's Mask (likewise by Townshend, and called *Tempe Restored*) was suspended in consequence of 'a soreness that fell into one of her delicate eyes.' It was performed at Shrovetide, and on the 7th Feb. a Privy Seal was issued to Edmund Taverner, Esq., for 600*l.* to be so applied; but this sum being found insufficient for the purpose, 200*l.* more were ordered to be paid to him under a Privy Seal, dated 20th February.

The cost of the Masks in the next year, Christmas 632-3, considerably exceeded 2000*l.*, independent of that portion of the charge which was borne by the office of the Revels, and which belonged to the ac-

* Vide Gifford's Ben Jonson, I. clx.

counts of that department. On the 23rd Dec. 1632, George Kirk, Esq., Gentleman of the Robes, had a Privy Seal for 450*l.* for 'masking attire,' as the instrument expresses it, 'not only for our own regal person, 'but also for such other maskers on whom we are 'pleased to bestow their said masking attire.' This sum was for the King's Mask on twelfth-day, for the preparations for which Edmund Taverner, Esq. had a warrant for 1000*l.*, dated 31st Dec. 1632. On the 20th Jan. 1632-3, to the same person was granted a Privy Seal for 800*l.*, 'towards the expense of a Mask, to be 'presented by our dearest consort, the Queen, at 'Shrovetide next.'

Independent of these Masks, the Queen got up a Pas-
A. D. toral at Somerset-House, at Christmas 1632-3,
1633. and in that piece it should seem that her Majesty herself took a part. About the same date * came out the most learned and notorious work ever published against theatrical performances,—*Histriomastix, the*

* Whitelocke says, that Prynne's *Histriomastix* was published six weeks before the Pastoral at Somerset-house, in which the Queen played, was performed; and that Laud and others, who had been 'angered by some of Prynne's books against Arminianism, showed the 'passage in the Index, "women actors, notorious whores," to the King, 'and informed him, that the book was purposely written against the 'Queen and her pastoral.' (*Memorials*, p. 18.) According to one Harl. MS., Prynne's *Histriomastix* was published on the day after the performance of the Queen's Pastoral; and according to another, that work had appeared 'a little before the Queen's acting of her play.' In either case, it would have been just as absurd and unjust for Laud to have taken it to the King, and represented it as directed against that particular performance of the Queen.

Players Scourge, by William Prynne, bearing the date of 1633, but published in 1632. Malone contented himself with referring to Whitelocke's *Memorials* on this interesting and important event*, but the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum contain some curious and contemporary evidence on the subject, in private letters written not long after the publication of Prynne's book, and the consequent arrest of its author. The following extract is from a familiar communication, containing a summary of the current news, from Justinian Pagett, a barrister, dated 28th of January, 1632-3: it is addressed 'To my much honoured 'friend, James Harrington, Esq. at Walton upon 'Trent†:—

'Mr. Prynne of Lincolnes Inne hath lately set 'forth a book, intitled Histrio-mastix or the Players 'Scourge, the sale of which is prohibited, and he to 'appeare at the High Commission on Thursday next, 'where, when I have heard what is charged against 'him, I will (if you desier it) send you a more parti- 'cular relation. His booke is extraordinarily stuffed 'with quotations of old authors, which (they say) are 'his only arguments. He cites St. Austin, who sayth, '*Si tantummodo boni et honesti viri in civitate essent, 'nec in rebus humanis Ludi Scenici esse debuissent:* 'but I do not conceive this to be the cause why he is 'called in question, but rather some exorbitant pas- 'sage concerning ecclesiastical government; for, I

* Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 120.

† Harl. MSS., No. 1026.

'heare, he compares the playing on the organs, twixt 'the first and second Lesson, to Enterludes in Stage-'playes. It is observable, that his booke was pub-'lished the next day after the Queenes Pastorall at 'Somersett House.'

The writer of the preceding account, on the 28th of January, had not seen Prynne's book, and only spoke of its contents from rumour; but Mr. George Gresley, in a letter dated from Essex House, 31st of January, 1632-3*, to Sir T. Puckering, quotes the author's words, and gives very exactly the nature of the charge against Prynne. He says:—

'Mr. Prinne, an Utter Barrister of Lincolns Inne, 'is brought into the High Commission Court and Star 'Chamber for publishing a booke (a little before the 'Queene's acting of her Play) of the Unlawfullness of 'Plaies, wherein in the Table of his Booke, and his 'brief Additions thereunto, he hath these words "Wo-'men actors notorious whores," and that St. Paul pro-'hibits women to speake publiquely in the Churche: '"and dares then (sayth he) any Christian Woman be 'so more then whoreshly impudent, as to act, to speake 'publiquely on a Stage (perchaunce in man's apparell 'and cut haire) in presence of sundrie men and women?" 'which wordes, it is thought by some, will cost him 'his eares, or heavily punisht and deepely fined.'

The expectations of the writer of this letter were soon more than realised: he thought that Prynne would 'lose his ears, or be heavily punished and

* Harl. MSS., No. 7000.

deeply fined,' speaking in the disjunctive, whereas he suffered beyond both these inflictions. Having been tried in the Star Chamber, he was twice set in the pillory, lost parts of both ears*, was fined 5000*l.*,

* The subsequent quotations on this subject fix the dates when Prynne was set in the pillory: they are from the Diary of Sir Humphrey Mildmay, before cited.

'May 7, 1634. Att the Hall, where I sawe Prynne in the pillory, 'and lost a piece of an eare.

'May 10. This fatall morning Prynne loste the other parte of an 'eare in Cheap[side].'

I have already had occasion, and shall have occasion again, to quote from this valuable MS., which, at one end of the volume, contains a journal of events, and at the other an account of the expenses of the writer in London and elsewhere. He does not seem to have been on very good terms with his wife, to have led a very gay life, and, among other things, to have given her just cause of complaint on the ground of infidelity. He enters everything without reserve; and the following are specimens of his daily expenses, not including the items of plays which he saw at the different theatres, because they are separately adverted to in the text:—

		£.	s.	d.
'21 Jan. 1631.	To the Wanton Nurse at M. Langhornes	0	1	0
'.. ..	To Mother Gill, a poor naughty woman	0	1	0
'14 July, 1632.	To a pretty wenche at Paule's Wharfe	0	1	0
'10 Nov. ..	To Thomas of the Stall of Cozeninge	0	1	6
'27 Nov. ..	At a Taverne with Ann Cressy	0	0	8
'12 April, 1633.	To Mr. John Percy for Rhemishe Tes- 'tament	0	8	0
'11 May ..	To Ducke Lane for popishe bookes	0	3	0
'26 June ..	To a purse for ballets	0	1	0
'22 July ..	Expences at a Cherry Garden	0	2	0
'1 Nov. ..	To Hunnis, fiddler at Brentwood	0	2	0
'8 Jan. ..	To Nath[l] for making of me merry, and 'to others at the same tyme at Much 'Hadam	0	2	0

expelled Lincoln's Inn, disbarred, deprived of his degree in the University of Oxford, and ordered to be imprisoned for life. It is to be observed, that this sentence was not executed until May, 1634, long after the publication of *Histriomastix*, and the denunciation of it by Laud, so that the King and his advisers had not even the excuse of temporary excitement for its infliction. In the interval between the judgment and its enforcement, it was believed by many that the punishment would be remitted*.

	£.	s.	d.
'19 March, 1633. To a bookseller for the Converted Jew	0	5	0
'14 July, 1634. To a Taverne with a *Bona* . .	0	1	0'

Two of the items in this MS. are particularly curious, in connexion with the family and name of Shakespeare. They run thus:—

'31 May, 1633. To Mr. Shakespere his man Jo, for one 'per of spurres with bosses, &c. this 'laste of May . . .	0	9	0
'4 Dec. .. To Jo, att Mr. Shakespers, for one per 'of spurres . . .	0	2	6

There are many notes in the margin of this account book, and opposite the first of these entries are placed these remarkable words, 'No player now;' as if the Shakespere here mentioned had once been a player, or at least had had some connexion with players. What relation, if any, this Shakespere might be to William Shakespeare, my researches have not enabled me to ascertain. I have been able to learn, however, that he bore the Christian name of Shakespeare's father, John, and that he was dead in 1637. By a Privy Seal, dated 16th of December, 13 Car. I., orders were given to the Lord Treasurer to pay to Mary Shakespere, 'widow and executrix of John Shakespere, our late Bittmaker deceased,' the sum of 1692*l.* 11*s.* due to her late husband. He must have been a man of considerable substance to allow so large a debt to be incurred. The Privy Seal is in the Chapter House, Westminster.

* The following passage upon this subject is quoted from the MS. journal of Sir Symonds d'Ewes, under date of 8th of May, 1634:—

Some quotations, applicable to the year 1632, made by Malone from the Register of Sir H. Herbert, must be noticed before we proceed further with the events of 1633: one of them relates to the licensing of Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady, or Humours reconciled*, (the Master of the Revels inverts the title, making the second the first,) on the 12th October, 1632, when Sir H. Herbert received 2*l.* as his fee. It would seem, from a passage in a letter by James Howell, dated 27th Jan. 1629, (quoted by Gifford *) that this play was already written and performed. It is clear, however, on the

'I departed from Stow-hall towards London, and the next day in 'the afternoon came safe thither. As soon as I lighted I heard a par- 'ticular news which much ensadded my heart, touching William 'Prynne, Esq. that had been an Utter Barrister of Lincolns Inn and a 'graduate in the University of Oxford, who had lost one ear already in 'the pillory, or a part of it, and was to lose a part of the other to-morrow. 'He was a most learned and religious gentleman, had written many 'acute, solid and elaborate treatises, not only against the blasphemous 'Anabaptists, in the defence of God's grace and providence, but 'against the vices of the clergy, and the abuses of the times. He had 'been censured in the Star-chamber a few months before for some 'passages in a book he wrote against stage-plays, called *Histriomastix*, 'as if he had in them let slip some words tending to the Queen's dis- 'honour, because he spoke against the unlawfulness of men wearing 'women's apparel, and women men's. Notwithstanding this censure, 'which most men were frighted at, to see that neither his academical 'nor barrister's gown could free him from the infamous loss of his ears, 'yet all good men generally conceived it would have been remitted; 'and many reported it was, 'till the sad and fatal execution of it this 'midsummer terme. I went to visit him a while after in the Fleet and 'to comfort him, and found in him the rare effects of an upright heart, 'and a good conscience, by his serenitie of spirit and cheerful patience.'

* Ben Jonson's Works, vi. 2.

authority of Sir Henry Herbert, that Howell's letter is ante-dated, and the time of the completion of the Magnetic Lady is fixed by the following sentence in a letter from John Pory to Sir Thomas Puckering, dated Sept. 20, 1632—'Ben Jonson (who I thought 'had been dead) hath written a play against next 'term called the Magnetick Lady.' It was licensed to the King's players, and Sir H. Herbert notices that he received his fee from Knight, who was the prompter at the Blackfriars theatre.

Another quotation from the same authority, dated 18th Nov. 1632, refers to a comedy called *The Ball*, which Sir Henry Herbert attributes to James Shirley, but which was in fact the joint production of Shirley and Chapman: it had been acted by the Queen's players under Beeston, at the Cockpit in Drury-lane, prior to the date of the entry of the Master of the Revels *, who found reason to complain of the manner in which 'lords and others of the Court' were personated in it, under the apprehension that he might be called to account for the offence of the poet †.

* The date of the licence by Sir Henry Herbert seems to have been 16th Nov. 1632; so that the information regarding objectionable passages soon reached him.

† The play was printed in 1639, probably without the objectionable passages, as nothing of the kind is to be traced in it. The following is the precise form of the entry by Sir H. Herbert.

'18 Novr. 1632. In the play of the Ball, written by Shirley, and 'acted by the Queen's players, there were divers personated so natur-'ally, both of lords and others of the Court, that I took it ill and would

In the spring of 1633 the King made a progress into Scotland, taking his departure from London on the 13th May. Whether any players attended him, as they had done his father, for his entertainment on the journey, we are without positive information *. When he arrived in the capital of Scotland in June, he found his Gentlemen of the Chapel there, whither they had proceeded by sea. A Privy Seal was issued on 31st April, placing in the hands of Stephen Boughton, 'Sub-dean of the Chapel,' 300*l.* to defray the charges of the Gentlemen of the Chapel attending the King into Scotland. That they went by sea appears from another document of the same kind, dated on the 6th May, 'for providing meals for 26 gentlemen of the chapel' during their voyage. The King returned to Greenwich towards the close of July.

A. D. 1633.

'have forbidden the play, but that Biston promised many things, which 'I found fault withall, should be left out, and that he would not suffer 'it to be done by the poet any more, who deserves to be punished: 'and the first that offends in this kind, of poets or players, shall be 'sure of public punishment.'

Here the offence seems to have been wholly that of the poet, and not of the actors, by their dresses or manners imitating people of consequence.

* The affirmative is rendered very probable by the following entry in the MS. Register of the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, still preserved in the Lord Chamberlain's office.

'25 Augt. 1634. A Council Warrant for 100*l.* for the Princes 'Players for their attendance abroad, during the progress of the Court.'

The King made no progress in 1634, and the money paid in August of that year had probably become due in the year preceding, when the King went to Scotland, called 'abroad' in the warrant.

The borough of Banbury had long been famous as the residence of Puritans, and early in May, 1633, just before the King commenced his progress, the Corporation gave a striking proof of their hostility to anything like plays and players*. It seems that some unfortunate company, not named, but duly authorized by a royal patent and by the commission of the Master of the Revels, had found their way to Banbury, where they perhaps attempted to perform: however, the vigilance of the Mayor and other Justices was not to be deceived, and the 'wandering rogues' were arrested, examined, and finally lodged in the town jail. These facts are stated in a letter sent by the Mayor of Banbury and two other Magistrates to the Privy Council, of which the following is a copy from the original in the State Paper Office. It is indorsed 'From the Maior of Banbury, &c., about Players:'—

'To the Right honble, the most honoured Lords, 'the Lords of his Maties most honor^ble. privy Counsell, 'present theis.

* Ben Jonson calls Zeal-o'-the-land Busy in his *Bartholomew Fair*, 'a Banbury Man,' and in his *Gipsies Metamorphosed*, he laughs at 'the loud pure wives of Banbury.' Davenant's *Wits* was written in 1633, and the following ridicule of the Puritans of Banbury may have arisen out of the proceeding about to be detailed.—

——— 'she is more devout
'Than a Weaver of Banbury, that hopes
'To intice heaven by singing to make him lord
'Of twenty looms.'

It would be very easy to accumulate many authorities upon this point from our old dramatists.

'Right honoble

'Our humble service to your Lordships premised '&c. Wee make bold to send to your Lordships 'herewithall a Pattent of licence, pretended by the 'bearers of it to be graunted by his Matie, and a 'commission from the Mr. of the Revells. The pat-'tent we suspect, the commission wee find rased: 'howsoever, wee find the parties (who have gone 'abroad into divers countyes with the same) wandring 'Rogues, if not more dangerous persons, as may 'appeare by their examinacions (which we have also 'sent to your Lordships), in which is apparant howe 'they have chaunged their names &c. Their be six 'of them, all which wee have committed to the prison 'of our Burrough, where wee shall kepe them safe, 'till your Lordships pleasure be signifyed to us. 'And soe wee humbly take our leaves, resting

'Your Lordships humble servaunts.

'Willm. Allen Maior.

'Thomas Whately, Justes.

'Thomas Halled Justis.

'May 6, 1633.'

The examination of the players before the Corporation was, no doubt, a singular appendix to this letter, but it is not extant. The proceedings of the Privy Council upon the subject are detailed in the Registers of that body. The reply to the Mayor and his brethren of the bench of Banbury was not written until the 22d May, and in the mean time the players, whose names appear from the Register to have been

Bartholomew Jones, Richard Whiting (or Johnson), Edward Damport (or Davenport), Drew (or True) Turner, Robert Haughton, and Richard Colwell, were kept in the Borough Jail. The answer of the Privy Council was as follows:—

'May 22d. 1633.

'We have seen your letters of the 6th. of this instant moneth, as also a patent of Licence pretended to be graunted by his Majestie, a Commission from the Master of the Revels, and the examinations of those delinquents, being (as you say) wandering roages and daungerous persons; and [as] we concur with you in opinion, that there may be forgerie and rasure, both in the said Patent and in the Commission, so we doe approve, and comend the discreete course you have taken in committing them to the common prison of your Burrough. Now, to the end that this abuse may be farther searched and examined, we doe hereby require and authorise you, to cause Jones and the rest of his complices (being five more) that are detained under restraint, to be released, and forthwith delivered to this bearer, Robert Cross, one of the Messengers of his Majesties Chamber, who hath warrant from this Board to receive them at your hands, and to bring them hether to answer before us for the crymes and misdemeanours wherewith they stand charged, and thereupon to be proceeded withall according to the quality of their offences, and the common lawes and justices of this Kingdom. And so &c.—Signed Lord Keeper, Lord Privie Seale' &c.

This was answering the Mayor and Corporation of Banbury in the spirit of their own letter; but the subsequent steps taken in the business seem to show, that the Privy Council only meant to relieve the unhappy players from their durance, without offending the authorities of the Borough. A warrant having been made out on the same day to Robert Cross, to take into his custody the six persons above named, he brought them to London by June 3rd, and on that day they 'tendered their appearance,' and it was directed that they should 'remain in the Messenger's custody till further order.' Perhaps the players satisfied the Privy Council, that they had acted at Banbury under sufficient authority, for, on the next day, the following entry is made in the Register:—

'June 4th 1633.

'This day the players, formerly sent for from Ban-
'bury, were discharged out of the Messenger's custody,
'upon bond given to be forthcoming whensoever they
'should be called for.'

In consequence of an order made on circuit, in Somersetshire, by Chief Justice Richardson and Baron Denham (father of the poet) for the total suppression of Wakes, Church-ales, &c., which was considered an infringement of the authority of the ecclesiastical power, the King, principally, it is said, at the instigation of Laud, thought fit, on the 18th of October, 1633, to 'ratify and publish' the Declaration regarding lawful sports and pastimes on the Sabbath-day, issued by James I., in 1618. This proceeding gave great

offence, not only to the Puritans, but to many of the moderate party in the Kingdom *. The Chief Justice was also called before the Privy Council, reproved, and compelled at the next assizes to revoke his former order.

It has been already stated, that if Laud laid the petition of certain inhabitants of Blackfriars, against the inconveniences arising from the theatre, before the Privy Council in 1631, there is no trace that any effectual measures were taken upon it. It is a matter of inference that the complaint was renewed in the Autumn of 1633, for on the 9th of October, in that year, we find the Privy Council entertaining the plan of removing the playhouse, and of making compensation to the parties interested and injured: the Aldermen of the ward, and two others, were appointed to examine into the subject, and to make a report on the value of the property by the 26th of October †. If any report

* The Declaration was printed in a separate form, in 8vo., by Robert Barker and the assigns of Robert Bill, with the date of 1634.

† The following is the order in question, extracted from the Privy Council Register.

'Octr. 9, 1633.

'Upon consideration this day had at the Board of the great incon-
'venience and annoyance occasioned by the resorte and confluence of
'coaches to the Playhouse in Black-fryars, whereby the streetes, being
'narrow thereabouts, are at those times become impassable, to the great
'prejudice of his Majestys subjects passing that way upon their severall
'occasions, and in particular to divers Noblemen and Counsellers of
'State, whose houses are that way, whereby they are many times hindred
'from their necessary attendance upon his Majesty's person and service:
'Their Lordshipps calling to mynde, that formerly upon complaint

of the kind were made to the Privy Council, it was not acted upon, for, instead of attempting to remove the Blackfriars theatre, an endeavour was made to remedy the evil by adopting regulations for the coaches. An order was published, and directed to be posted at St. Paul's, at the Conduit in Fleet-street, and at the gate of the Blackfriars, which, after reciting the nature of the complaint, went on to notice the 'easy passage by water to the playhouse,' and the facility of approach to persons on foot: it then directed, that no coaches should be allowed to come nearer the theatre 'than 'the farther side of St. Paul's Church-yard on the one 'side, and Fleet Conduit on the other side,' and that even there coaches should not be allowed to remain.

In consequence, probably, of inattention to this exercise of authority, on the 29th of November the Lord Mayor was specially required by the Privy Council to see the regulations duly and strictly enforced.

'hereof made, the Board was of opinion that the said Play-house was 'fitt to bee removed from thence, and that an indifferent recompence and 'allowance should be given them for their interests in the said house, and 'buildings thereunto belonging, did therefore think fit and order, that 'Sir Henry Spiller and Sir William Becher Kn^ts^, the Aldermen of the 'Ward, Lawrence Whitaker Esq. & ——— Child, Citizen of London, 'or any three of them, be hereby required to call such of the parties 'interested before them as they shall thinke fitt, and upon hearing their 'demaunds, and view of the place to make an indifferent estimate and 'value of the said house and buildings and of their interests therein, and 'to agree upon and set downe such recompence to be given for the same 'as shall be reasonable, and thereupon to make report to the Board of 'their doings and proceedings therein by the 26th of this present.'

It is particularly noted at the head of the next proceeding of the Privy Council on the subject, on the 29th of December, that the King was himself present in Council; and we can have little hesitation in deciding, that between the 20th of November and the 29th of December, some representations had been made personally to his Majesty in favour of the actors at the Blackfriars, whose interests would be seriously affected by carrying into execution the regulations of the Privy Council. On the 29th of December, an order was made 'to explain' the former decision, on account of 'the prejudice to the players, his Majesty's servants,' and this explanation was a permission, 'that as 'many coaches as may stand within the Blackfriars 'gate may enter and stay there, or return thither at 'the end of the play.' This, in fact, was a complete rescinding of the regulations of the 20th of November*.

The earliest entry by Sir H. Herbert in the year 1633, is dated 7th of May, when he received his customary fee of 2*l.* on licensing Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*, with the omission of that part which was in-

* Malone (who knew nothing of the proceedings of the Privy Council on the subject) published, from the Stafford Letters, i. 175, one from Mr. Garrard, dated 9th of January, 1633-4, in which he refers to the order of the Privy Council which had been hung up 'near Paul's 'and the Blackfriars, to command all that resort to the playhouse there 'to send away their coaches:' Garrard states further, that for two or three weeks 'it was kept very strictly,' but that it was not enforced at the time when he wrote (*Vide* Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 151). The reason for the non-enforcement, which he does not mention, is that assigned above in the text.

tended to ridicule Inigo Jones *. The quarrel is supposed to have arisen out of the ill success of *Chloridia*, in which they had been jointly concerned, at Shrovetide, 1630-1. There is also a remarkable entry on July 3rd, 1633, regarding the licensing of Shirley's play of *The Young Admiral*, which the Master of the Revels admired, because it was free from oaths, profaneness, and obsceneness †.

The licensing of Ben Jonson's *Magnetic Lady* has been already noticed; and prior to the 24th of October, 1633, the company of the King's servants, by whom it was acted, seem to have been called to account by the High Commission Court, for certain interpolations, to which neither the author nor the Master of the Revels

* The terms of this singular entry are these:—

'R. for allowing of The Tale of a Tub, Vitruvius Hoops part wholly 'struck out, and the motion of the Tub, by command from my lord 'Chamberlain, exceptions being taken against it by Inigo Jones, Sur-'veyer of the King's Works, as a personal injury unto him. May 7, '1633, 2*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.*'

† 'The comedy called The Younge Admiral, being free from oaths, 'profaneness or obsceneness, hath given me much delight and satisfac-'tion in the readinge, and may serve for a pattern to other poets, not 'only for the bettering of manners and language, but for the improve-'ment of the quality, which hath received some brushings of late.— 'When Mr. Shirley hath read this approbation, I know it will encourage 'him to pursue this beneficial and cleanly way of poetry; and when other poets heare and see his good success, I am confident they will 'imitate the original for their own credit, and make such copies in this 'harmless way, as shall speak them masters in their art at the first sight 'to all judicious spectators. It may be acted this 3rd of July, 1633.

'I have entered this allowance for direction to my successor, and for 'example to all poets that shall write after the date hereof.'

was privy. The nature of the interpolations cannot be ascertained, but the consequence was, that the actors were silenced for a time by imprisonment, or by a less severe mode of prohibition*. They presented two petitions to the Star Chamber, in the first of which they laid the blame on Ben Jonson and Sir H.

* Very nearly about the same period the company acting at the Salisbury Court theatre incurred the displeasure of the Master of the Revels in relation to a play called the second part of *The City Shuffler*, as appears from the following extract from the office-book of Sir Henry Herbert:—

'Octob. 1633. Exception was taken by Mr. Sewster to the second 'part of the Citty Shuffler, which gave me occasion to stay the play till 'the company had given him satisfaction, which was done the next day, 'and under his hande he did certefye mee that he was satisfyed.'

A play called *The City Shuffler* was among the MSS. destroyed by Warburton's servant.

On the 19th of the same month the performance of Fletcher's '*Tamer Tamed, or the Taming of the Tamer*,' which Sir H. Herbert then calls 'an old play,' was forbidden on account of 'oaths, profaneness and ribaldry.' On the 21st October the King's players were allowed to represent it, after it had undergone the purgation thought necessary by the Master of the Revels. With the entry referring to this comedy, Sir H. Herbert inserts a 'submission upon a former disobedience,' by the King's players in December 1624, when they acted *The Spanish Viceroy* without the proper sanction, and were punished for their misconduct. It may be worth while here to subjoin the names of the actors who subscribed the written 'submission' on this occasion: viz.—

Joseph Taylor,
Richard Robinson,
Elyard Swanston,
Thomas Pollard,
Robert Benfielde,
George Burght,
John Lowen,
John Shancke,
John Rice,
Will. Rowley,
Richard Sharpe.

Herbert, but in the second acknowledged that they only were guilty, and, as Sir Henry expresses it, 'did me right in my care to purge their plays of all offence.' In an interview he had with Archbishop Laud, on the 24th of October, 1633, the Master of the Revels was acquitted of any negligence *.

Sir H. Herbert is this year more particular than usual in his account of the plays performed at court. On the 17th of November *Richard III.* was acted by the King's players, and on the 19th of November *The Young Admiral* by the Queen's players †. *The*

* Sir Humphrey Mildmay not unfrequently visited the theatres when he was in London, and the following items in the account of his daily expenses, before quoted, are not without interest: they relate to the public performance of plays and to other matters in 1633.

		£.	s.	d.
13 May, 1633.	To a play	0	2	0
16 May, ——	To a play that day, being Thursday, at the Globe . . .	0	2	0
31 May, ——	To Mr. Shakespere his man, for one pair of spurres with bosses .	0	9	0
.. .. ——	For a toye of Jos. Hall, Bp of Exon, of Na. Butter . . .	0	1	0
6 June, 1633	For 4 bookes in Duck-lane, harde to be hadd . . .	0	10	0
.. .. ——	To a pretty and merry comedy at the Cocke [pit] . . .	0	1	0
8 June, ——	To a play at the Globe, with Dorcrutch	0	1	6
18 June, ——	To a play at the Globe . .	0	1	10
4 Nov., ——	To Jo at Mr. Shakesperes, for one per of spurres . . .	0	2	6
14 Nov., ——	To Mr. —— and my selfe at a play	0	3	0

† The first of these pieces was, probably, Shakespeare's tragedy (although we have already seen that Samuel Rowley was also author

Taming of the Shrew was performed on the 26th of November, and *The Tamer Tamed* on the 28th of November. Dramatic amusements were again required on the 10th and 16th of December, when *The Loyal Subject* and *Hymen's Holiday* were severally represented *.

We hear of no masks this Christmas, and no privy seals are extant for the payment of money on account of them: the King, Queen and Court seem to have been well satisfied with dramatic amusements of a less

of a play upon this portion of English history), and the last Shirley's comedy. Sir Henry Herbert's entries regarding both are thus worded:—

'On Saturday 17th of November, being the Queen's birth-day' [Malone states correctly that the Queen's birthday was on the 16th] 'Richard the Third was acted by the K. players at St. James, where 'the King and Queen were present, it being the first play the Queen 'saw since her Majesty's delivery of the Duke of York, 1633.

'On Tuesday 19th of November being the King's birthday, the 'Young Admiral was acted at St. James by the Queen's Players, and 'liked by the K. and Queen.

* Sir H. Herbert's words are these:—

'On Tuesday night at St. James', the 26th of Nov. 1633, was acted 'before the King and Queen, The Taming of the Shrew. Liked.

'On Thursday night at St. James', the 28th of November 1633, was 'acted before the King and Queen The Tamer Tamed, made by 'Fletcher. Very well liked.

'On Tuesday night at Whitehall, the 10th of December 1633, was 'acted before the King and Queen The Loyal Subject, made by 'Fletcher, and very well liked by the King.

'On Monday night, the 16th of December 1633, at Whitehall, was 'acted before the King and Queen Hymen's Holiday or Cupid's Va-'garies, an old play of Rowley's. Liked.'

costly and more rational description; and the services of the King's company were called for A. D. on the 1st and 6th of January, 1633-4. 1634. The play on the first night was *Cymbeline*, and on the second *The Faithful Shepherdess**.

The peril in which the Master of the Revels was temporarily placed in October, 1633, in consequence of offensive matter (probably oaths) introduced by the King's actors into *The Magnetic Lady*, appears to have rendered him afterwards extremely cautious on the point; and when, early in January, 1633-4, Davenant's *Wits* was presented to him for licence, he crossed out many exclamations, that struck him in the light of oaths. Through Endymion Porter, Davenant complained to the King of this exercise of authority, and on the 9th of January the King called the Master of the Revels before him, and directed that he should allow such words as *faith*, *death* and *slight* to stand, 'as asseverations only, and no oaths.' Davenant was in considerable favour at this date, which might induce the King to take especial interest about his play. Notwithstanding this royal decision

* These two performances are thus mentioned by Sir Henry Herbert:—

'On Wednesday night, the first of January 1633, Cymbeline was 'acted at Court by the Kings Players—Well liked by the King.

'On Monday night, the 6th of January and the Twelfth Night, was 'presented at Denmark House before the King and Queen Fletcher's 'Pastoral called The Faithful Shepherdess, in the clothes the Queen 'had given Taylor the year before of her own pastoral. The scenes 'were fitted to the Pastoral, and made by Mr. Inigo Jones in the great 'chamber, 1633.'

against him, Sir Henry Herbert made the following memorandum in his office-book, showing that he was 'convinced against his will.'

'The King is pleased to take faith, death, slight, 'for asseverations and no oaths, to which I do humbly 'submit as my masters judgment; but under favour 'conceive them to be oaths, and enter them here to 'declare my opinion and submission.'

The play was therefore returned to Davenant, 'corrected by the King,' on the 10th of January, and on the 28th of January it was acted before Charles and his Queen, and 'well liked;' yet Sir H. Herbert qualifies this statement by adding:—'It had a various fate on 'the stage and at court, though the King commended 'the language, but disliked the plot and characters.'

Previous to this date, we learn from the same manuscript, Massinger's *Guardian* had been played by the King's company on the 12th of January, and Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*, by the Queen's servants, on the 14th of January: the first was 'well liked,' and the last 'not liked.' It was followed, on the 16th of January, by *The Winter's Tale*, by the King's players, which was also 'liked.' Fletcher's *Night-Walkers* was represented on the 30th of January, two days after the performance of Davenant's *Wits*, and 'liked as a merry play*.' Thus between the 16th of No-

* This was probably Fletcher's play with alterations by Shirley; for, on the 11th of May, 1633, Sir Henry Herbert makes the following memorandum regarding the receipt of his fee of 2*l.*:—'For a play of Fletcher's, corrected by Shirley, called *The Night-Walkers*.'

vember, and the 30th of January, thirteen plays were acted before the King and Queen. Sir H. Herbert's memoranda regarding these exhibitions contain nothing peculiar.

Nor did the court revels end here, for the Middle and Inner Temples, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn, joined in the presentation of a mask on the 3d of February*. It was called *The Triumph of Peace*, written by Shirley, and the scenes and machinery the invention of Inigo Jones. It was a most expensive exhibition; and Whitelocke states that the music only, under the superintendence of William Lawes and Simon Ives, cost no less than 1000*l.*, while the clothes of the horsemen were valued at 10,000*l.* † The maskers and antimaskers assembled

* Malone states that this event took place on the 2d of February, and in this he follows Sir H. Herbert; but the printed copy on the title-page states, that it was performed 'before the King and Queen in the Banquetting House at Whitehall, February the third 1633.'

† Whitelocke himself composed an air for the occasion, which was afterwards extraordinarily popular under the name of 'Whitelocke's Coranto.' He gives a minute account of the exhibition of this mask; and Dr. Burney, in his *History of Music* (iii. 376), has quoted from a MS. of Whitelocke's *Memorials*, the following particulars, which are also to be found in Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 113:—

'For the music, which was particularly committed to my charge, I 'gave to Mr. Ives and to Mr. Lawes 100*l.* a piece for their rewards: 'for the four French gentlemen, the Queen's servants, I thought that 'a handsome and liberal gratifying them would be made known to 'the Queen their mistress, and well taken by her. I therefore invited 'them one morning to a collation at St. Dunstan's Tavern, in the great 'room, the Oracle of Apollo, where each of them had his plate laid 'him, covered, and the napkin by it; and when they had opened their

at Ely and Hatton Houses, and proceeded in procession through the streets to Whitehall. So popular was the performance, that Shirley's description of the mask with the songs, &c. went through three editions in the year in which it was represented *.

The following extract of a letter, from Justinian Pagett to his 'cousin Tremyll,' without date, but clearly written only a few days after the mask was presented, has never been published: it contains some points not mentioned elsewhere, and among them the fact, that *The Triumph of Peace*, having been performed at Whitehall on Monday, gave such satisfaction to the King, that he required it to be repeated, with the whole ceremony of the procession, on the Tuesday following, at Merchant Tailors' Hall.

'I have sent you a booke of our Masque, which 'was presented on munday last with much applause 'and commendation from the K and Queene and all 'the Spectators. The K and Q supt that night at Salis-'bury House, and there saw us ride in the streetes, 'after which they presently went by water to White-'hall, and there saw us again from the long gallery at

'plates they found in each of them forty pieces of gold, of their masters 'coin, for the first dish, and they had cause to be much pleased with 'this surprisal. The rest of the musicians had rewards answerable to 'their parts and qualities. The charges of all the rest of the Mask, 'which were borne by the Societies, were accounted to be above '20,000*l.*'

* 'The third impression' has considerable variations from the others, both in the description, and in the performances of the anti-masks. It was printed by John Norton, for William Cooke, 1633.

'the upper end of the tilting yard When the 'masque was ended, we all kissed the K and Queenes 'hand, and then were conducted by my Lord Cham- 'berlain and other Lords to a rich banquet, whether 'the K and Q came, and took a taste, and then gra- 'ciously smiling upon us, left us to the sole enjoying 'of that well furnisht table, with strict command that 'not any should touch a bitt but ourselves. The 'next day the K sent for our Marshall, Mr. Thomas 'Dorrell of Lincolns Inn, and Knighted him. And 'being much pleased and taken with the sight hath 'sent to us to ride againe on Tuesday next to Mer- 'chant Taylers Hall, in the same manner as we rode 'to White-hall, and there to meete his Ma^ty at supper, 'and to present our Masque. Sir Henry Vayne, and 'other great Travellers say they never saw such a 'sight in any part of the world.'

Whitelocke informs us, that the Four Inns of Court wished, by the exhibition of this mask, 'to 'manifest the difference of their opinion from Mr. 'Prynne's new learning, and to confute his *Histrio-* '*mastix* against interludes;' and it is most probable, that the extraordinary encouragement given by the Court about this period to theatrical representations grew out of the same disposition. We farther read in Sir H. Herbert's Register that Shirley's *Gamester*, which he had licensed on the 11th Nov. 1633, was acted at Court on the 6th Feb. 1633-4: he subjoins, that the King, through him, had furnished the poet with the plot, and that his Majesty said, that 'it was the best play he had seen for seven years.'

The splendour of the Mask of *The Triumph of Peace*, in the opinion of the Master of the Revels, was exceeded by a similar performance on Shrove-Tuesday, 18th Feb. 1633-4, in which the King danced with eleven Lords, attended by ten pages. He adds, and it is the only known source of information upon the subject,—it was the noblest mask of my time to this day, the best poetry, best scenes, and the best habits. The King and Queen were very well pleased with my service, and the Queen was pleased to tell me, before the King, '*Pour les habits, elle n'avoit rien vue de si 'brave.*'

As Sir H. Herbert furnishes very little intelligence respecting plays performed either at Court, or at the public theatres in 1634*, we must resort to such other

* He mentions only that Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois* was performed on Easter Monday, and 'the Pastorall' on Easter Tuesday, by the King's players.

The last player of note, in the part of Bussy d'Amboys, seems to have been Elliard Swanston, whose name has often occurred among the King's players in 1625. Edmund Gayton, in his 'Festivous Notes on Don Quixote,' 1654, thus speaks of him and Taylor:—'He was 'instantly metamorphosed into the stateliest, gravest, and commanding 'soul that eye ever beheld: Taylor acting Arbaces, or Swanston 'D'Amboys, were shadows to him.'

Swanston afterwards became a puritan, or at least was one of the very few players who joined the party opposed to the King. This fact appears from a tract printed in 1648, entitled, 'A Key to the Cabinet of the Parliament, by their Remembrancer:' after alluding to the 'suppression of all holidays,' the writer asks, 'what need is there of any 'playes? Will not these serve well enough, especially when they have 'gotten Hillyar Swansted, the player, to be one?' He mistakes the spelling of both Elliard Swanston's names, but no doubt the same individual is intended.

though scanty, sources of information, as are within our power: the MS. of the diary and account-book of Sir Humphrey Mildmay in a degree supplies the deficiency. Here we find mention of Davenant's *Wits*, and of his *Love and Honour* * ; a 'new play,' which Mildmay names *Lasander and Calista*, 'being a poem;' Lodowick Carlell's *Spartan Ladies*, and 'the play of *Pastorell*.' The only theatres he mentions are the Blackfriars and the Cockpit.—The items are subjoined in a note †.

The MS. Register of the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery proves incontestibly, notwithstanding the silence of Sir H. Herbert, that no less than twenty-two plays were acted before the King by his own company, in the year preceding April, 1634, including of course those usually represented at Christmas

* It was performed on the 12th Dec. 1634; an earlier date than has yet been assigned to it. The following is the memorandum in the Diary; for neither that, nor *Lasander and Calista*, are named in the account of expenses: '12 Dec. 1634. To a play of *Love and Honour*.'

† They apply to a whole year, beginning with

		£.	s.	d.
21 Jan. 1633-4.	To a playe at Bla. fryers . .	0	1	6
22	To a play at the fryers, the Witts .	0	1	0
27	To a play with Com. Panheard .	0	3	0
.. .. ..	For a booke, and the playe of Pastorell	0	2	0
19 Feb. ..	For the Masque of his Ma. . .	0	0	6
20 March ..	To a base play at the Cockepitt .	0	1	6
1 May, 1634.	To a new play called the Spartan Lady	0	1	3
8	To a play with Dom. Ch. Abdy. .	0	1	0
21	To a playe with company . .	0	6	0
12 Dec. ..	To a play with the 2 Southlandes .	0	4	6

and Shrovetide. For these 220*l.*, or at the rate of 10*l.* per play, were paid to the then leaders of the King's players—John Lowen, Joseph Taylor, and Elliard Swanston*.

The only extract made by Malone from Sir H. Herbert's Register, relating to plays in 1634, is a notice, that on the 13th May of that year, 'the Queen was at Blackfriars to see Massinger's play.' Malone adds, that the piece she then saw, was the tragedy of *Cleander*, and, that it was 'produced on the 7th of the same month,' but in fact it was licensed on that day: it does not at all follow that it was brought out on the very day it was allowed by the Master of the Revels, although it might sometimes so happen. Sir H. Herbert does not mention this visit of the Queen to the Blackfriars playhouse as an extraordinary or novel occurrence.

* The item is quoted in the following form by Chalmers, *Apol.* p. 507 :—

'27 April, 1634—A warrant for 220*l.* unto John Lowen, Joseph Taylor, and Elliard Swanston, for themselves and the rest of their fellows, the King's players, for 22 plays by them acted before his Majesty within a whole year.'

ANNALS OF THE STAGE,

FROM THE YEAR 1635 TO THE CLOSING OF THE THEATRES.

On the 10th Jan. 1634-5, a Privy Seal was issued to Edmund Taverner, Esq., to enable him to A. D. receive a larger sum than we have yet seen 1634-5. paid at once on account of any Mask at court: it was for 1400*l.* 'towards the charge of a mask, to be pre-'sented before his Majesty at Whitehall at Shrovetide 'next*.' Sir H. Herbert says nothing of this performance; his MS. (as far as Malone has quoted it†) for the year beginning Jan. 1st, 1634-5, being occupied chiefly with an account of the establishment of a company of French players in London‡.

* Chalmers, who obtained his knowledge of this fact from the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office, and not from the original Privy Seal, which is extant among the records in the Chapter-house (see *Apology*, 508), states that this was the Mask of which Sir H. Herbert records the acting as the noblest of his time—the best poetry, best scenes, and the best habits. This is a mistake—Sir H. Herbert, as has been shown, is speaking of the Mask of Shrovetide, 1633-4, and not of Shrovetide, 1634-5.

† Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 120.

‡ Under the date of 16th Feb. 1634-5, he notices, that he had committed a man of the name of Cromes, a broker in Long-lane, for lending to the players of Salisbury-court theatre an old church robe with *Jesus* upon it. He was released on the next day. Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 237.

The unsuccessful 'attempt' of the French actors and actresses, in 1629, seems for some years to have deterred others from the trial of a similar experiment; but early in the spring of 1635, a company of performers came over from France under the especial patronage of the Queen: they played before her in private on the 15th Feb., and being 'commended by her Majesty to the King,' they performed in the Cockpit at Whitehall on the 17th Feb., a French comedy, to which Sir H. Herbert gives the name of *Melise*, 'with good approbation.' After mentioning these facts, he proceeds as follows:—

'This day being Friday, and the 20th. of the same 'month (February), the King told me his pleasure, 'and commanded me to give order, that this French 'company should play the two sermon days in the 'week, during their time of playing in Lent, and in 'the House of Drury Lane, where the Queen's play-'ers usually play. The King's pleasure I signified 'to Mr. Beeston the same day, who obeyed readily.'

It is here to be remarked, that this order produced no immediate injury to the Queen's English players, of whom Beeston was the leader, because no company was allowed to play upon the sermon-days of Lent. Sir H. Herbert adds, what shews that the hostility to French performers in 1629 was not revived in 1635, perhaps, because there were no actresses among them—'they had (he says) the benefit of playing on the 'sermon-days, and got two hundred pounds at least, 'besides many rich clothes were given them.' Al-

though he is not distinct upon the point, he is probably speaking of the profits of the French company during the whole period of Lent, including Passion-week, which he says 'they had freely to themselves,' and which extraordinary advantage he obtained from the King for them. He further registers that he did 'the French' all these courtesies *gratis*, although offered 10*l.*, because 'he wished to render the Queen, his mistress, an acceptable service.'

On the arrival of Easter, the French company was under the necessity of relinquishing the Cock- A. D. pit theatre to Beeston, and the rest of the 1635. Queen's English players, but they performed at court on Easter Monday, 4th April, when they presented the *Trompeur Puni*, (as Sir H. Herbert expresses it,) 'with better approbation than the other,' meaning, most likely, the comedy of *Melise*, which they had acted on the 17th February preceding. On Wednesday night, the 16th April, 'the French played *Alcimedor* with good approbation *.'

With so much spirit was this undertaking conducted, that in considerably less than a month after this date, a new theatre had been prepared for the French performers: it was in Drury-lane, and on the 5th May, 1635, a warrant was granted to Josias

* 'On the 10th May, 1635, a warrant was issued for 30*l.* unto Mons. 'Josias Floridor, for himself and the rest of the French players, for three 'plays acted by them at the Cockpit.'—Chalmers' *Apol.* p. 508. This does not refer to the Cockpit in Drury-lane, where the French players had acted during Lent, but to the Cockpit at Whitehall, in which dramatic performances sometimes took place.

D'Aunay, and Hurfriis de Lau (so Sir H. Herbert spells their names) and others, empowering them to act there during pleasure. By a subsequent item, it seems that the King had consented to relinquish in their favour what was called 'the manage-house,' a part of the riding-school, in order that it might be converted into a playhouse for the French company *. When they began, and how long they continued to act there, is uncertain; but on the 21st December, 1635, the Master of the Revels records, that the Pastoral of *Florimene* was played in Whitehall by the French Ladies who attended the Queen †.

* It has no date, and is in these terms:

'The King was pleased to command my lord chamberlain to direct 'his warrant to Monsieur Le Fevure, to give him a power to contract 'with the Frenchmen for to build a playhouse in the manage-house, 'wch. was done accordingly by my advice and allowance.'

Here, again Sir H. Herbert is careful to note that 'These French-'men were commended unto me by the Queen, and have passed through 'my hands *gratis*.' As Malone has remarked, he nevertheless permitted them to 'give his deputy 3*l*. for his pains.'

In a MS. book in the Lord Chamberlain's office, is the following entry referring to this point: it is quoted by Chalmers in his *Apology*, p. 506.

'18 April 1635—His Majesty has commanded me to signify his 'royal pleasure that the French comedians (having agreed with Mons. 'le Fabure) may erect a stage, scaffolds and seats, and all other ac-'commodations, which shall be convenient, and act and present inter-'ludes and stage-plays, at his house during his Majesty's pleasure 'without any disturbance, hindrance or interruption. And this shall 'be to them, and Mons. le Febure, and to all others a sufficient dis-'charge,' &c.

† 'The Pastoral of Florimene, with the description of the scenes and

The French company, under Floridor, again performed before the court in December, 1635, but the day is not mentioned *. The success of the renewed attempt by the French seems to have encouraged certain Spanish actors to visit this country: they were allowed to play before the King on the 23d December, 1635, but we do not afterwards hear of their performances †.

At this date the King was again considerably in debt to various companies of English players, for representations before the court. On the 24th May, 1635, a warrant was issued to John Lowen and the rest of the King's players, for 250*l.* for twenty plays acted as long ago as between 13th May, 1624, and 30th May, 1626. On the 24th, and 30th January, 1634-5,

'interludes, as it was sent me by Mr. Inigo Jones, I allowed for the 'press this 14th December, 1635. The Pastoral is in French, and 'tis 'the argument only put into English, that I have allowed to be printed.

'Le [La] Pastorale de Florimene fust representé devant le Roy et la 'Royne, le Prince Charles, et le Prince Palatin, le 21 Decem. jour de 'St. Thomas, par les filles Françoise de la Royne, et firent tres bien, 'dans la grande sale de Whitehall, aux depens de la Royne.'—MS. Herbert. Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 122.

* For this fact, Malone quotes the MS. Office-book of the then Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery: a warrant was issued for 10*l.* 'to Josias Floridor, for himself and the rest of 'the French players, for a tragedy by them acted before his Majesty 'in Decr. last.'

† The only evidence respecting the experiment of the Spanish company is derived from the same source. '10*l.* paid to John Navarro, for 'himself and the rest of the company of Spanish players, for a play 'presented before his Majesty Decr. 23d. 1635.'—Sir H. Herbert does not notice the Spanish players in his Register.

similar warrants had been signed in favour of William Blagrave and the children of the Revels, for two sums of 30*l.* each, which had been due since 1631. Five plays by 'the Prince's Comedians' in 1634, were paid for by warrant for 100*l.* to Joseph Moore, Andrew Kane, and Ellis Worth, on the 10th December, 1635.

Sir Humphrey Mildmay, in his MS. Diary, notices by name three plays he had seen in the course of 1635, viz. Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, Shakespeare's *Moor of Venice*, and Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure*, which last he emphatically speaks of as a 'rare play'. He frequently enters having been to the play, without inserting the title of the piece performed*.

At this date, in the Register of Sir H. Herbert, and in the MS. preserved in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, we find mention only of the following companies in London, independent of the French and Spanish players, if, indeed, the latter obtained any settled place of performance, which is extremely doubtful:—

1. The King's company, under Lowen and Taylor,

* The following are some of his entries:—

21 April, 1635.		After dinner to the Elder Brother at the bla. fryers.
28 ..	..	This afternoone I spent att a playe with good company.
6 May	..	Att the bla. fryers, and a play this day called the More of Venice
25 Nov.	..	After dinner to a foolishe playe at the fryers.
27 ..	..	The afternoone I spent with the Dr. at a playe.
8 Dec.	..	Dined with Rob. Dowgell, and went to the La. of Pleasure, and saw that rare playe.

The Lady of Pleasure had been licensed by Sir Henry Herbert on the 15th Oct. 1635. Its popularity was probably great.

playing, as formerly, at the Globe and Blackfriars theatres.

2. The Queen's players, under Christopher Beeston, occupying the Cockpit in Drury Lane*.

3. The Prince's players, under Joseph Moore and Andrew Kane, playing at the Fortune in Golding Lane.

* In 1635, when *Hannibal and Scipio*, by Nabbes, was played by the Queen's servants, they consisted, among others, of the following performers, as appears by the list of characters and actors prefixed to that tragedy.

William Sherlock,
John Sumner,
George Stutfield,
William Allen,
Hugh Clerke,
Robert Axen,
Anthony Turner,
Michael Bowyer,
John Page,
Ezekiel Fenn,
Theophilus Bird,
Richard Perkins.

A little earlier (about 1630), when Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West* was revived, Christopher Goad, William Robinson, and —— Wilbraham, belonged to the company. Theophilus Bird, in the list of persons before that play, is named Theophilus Bourne, showing that he was called either Bird or Bourne, as his father had been before him, who, in Henslowe's Diary, is constantly called 'William Bird, otherwise Borne.' Sir H. Herbert states (without date, but about 1637), that he 'disposed Perkins, Sumner, Sherlock, and Turner, to Salisbury Court, and joined them with the best of that company;' probably to strengthen its then weakness. The Turner here mentioned was Anthony Turner, and not Henry Turner, who, in March, 1639-40, had become the leader of the Queen's players, though he is not included in the list in 1635.

4. The Children of the Revels, under William Blagrave, who are spoken of as a company distinct from that of the Queen, but the place of their performance is not stated: it was possibly the Red Bull.

5. The Salisbury Court company, so called in all the accounts, under the management of a person of the name of Richard Heton *.

In the beginning of 1636, an increase was made in the salaries and allowances of the officers of the Revels, as a compensation for additional duties. Those additional duties began, as appears by documents remaining in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, in 1630, when the Master, the Clerk Comptroller, the Clerk, the Yeoman, and the Groom of the Revels were required to attend the court from the 30th Oct. to the end of Shrovetide; whereas, until then, they had only been called upon to be in readiness from the 30th Nov. to the end of Shrovetide: for this month, the Master was allowed 12*l.* (at the rate of 8*s.* per day), the Clerk Comptroller, Clerk, and Yeomen, 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* each, and the Groom 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, making in the whole an increase of 23*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* Orders for this purpose were given on the 25th of May, 1636, and on the 13th Feb., 1636-7, with a retrospective operation to the year

A. D. 1636.

* 'On the 8th Feb. 1636-7, Richard Heton had a warrant, for himself and the rest of the company of players at Salisbury Court, for three plays acted by them before his Majesty, in October and February, 1635. Two at 20*l.* a piece, being at Hampton Court; the other at 10*l.*, being at St. James's.' Chalmers' *Apology*, p. 509.

1631, so that the different officers of the Revels were allowed their arrears.

The Court Revels, at Shrovetide in this year, included plays at court, and a Mask in the Middle Temple. Sir Henry Herbert mentions the following, among the plays in the spring:—The second part of *Arviragus and Philicia*, on 16th February;—*the Silent Woman*, on the 18th February;—*the Duke's Mistress*, on the 22d February;—*Love's Aftergame* (by the Salisbury Court players), on the 24th February;—and *the Knight of the Burning Pestle*, on the 28th February. The first and second parts of *Arviragus and Philicia* were acted before the King, Queen, Prince, and the Elector Palatine, on Easter Monday and Tuesday, the 18th and 19th April. The Masque in the Middle Temple was Davenant's* *Triumphs of the Prince d'Amour*, on the 23rd February, which the Queen, and many ladies of

* It is known that Davenant succeeded Ben Jonson, as Poet Laureat, on the death of the latter in Aug. 1637; but for some cause or other he did not obtain the pension until a year and a half had elapsed, and then with the omission of the clause granting the 'terse of Canary Wine.' The Privy Seal for Davenant's pension is in the Chapter-house, Westminster: it is dated 10th December, 1638, and it gives to 'William Davenant, Gent.' 'one annuity or yearly pension of one 'hundred pounds, in consideration of service heretofore done, or here-'after to be done.' It says nothing about 'encouraging him to proceed in those services of wit and pen,' which are mentioned in Ben Jonson's warrant on 6th March, 5 Car. I. Yet there is no reason to believe, that Davenant was out of favour with the King and Court at this period: the contrary may be inferred from various circumstances.

her court, attended in the dresses of citizens: she sat on a scaffold among her subjects*.

The plague, having broken out in London, was raging with so much violence in the spring of 1636, that it was found necessary to prevent 'dangerous assemblies of the people,' by the 'suppression,' for a time, of theatrical amusements. An order for this purpose, dated 10th of May, is extant in the registers of the Privy Council, which forbids the representation 'of stage-plays, interludes, shows, and spectacles, until 'farther order.' Sir Henry Herbert did not communicate this decision until the 12th of May, when he sent information of it to 'the four companies,' whom he does not name in his office-book; but he,

* Sir H. Herbert gives the following particulars of this exhibition:—

'On Wednesday the 23d Feb. 1635 [1635-6], the Prince d'Amours 'gave a Mask to the Prince Elector and his brother, in the Middle 'Temple, when the Queen was pleased to grace the entertainment by 'putting off majesty to put on a citizen's habit, and to sit upon a scaf- 'fold on the right hand amongst her subjects. The Queen was 'attended, in the like habits, by the Marques of Hamilton, the Coun- 'tess of Denbigh, the Countess of Holland, and the Lady Elizabeth 'Fielding. Mrs. Basse, the law-woman, lead in this royal citizen and 'her company.

'The Earl of Holland, the Lord Goring, Mr. Percy, and Mr. Jermyn, 'were the men that attended. The Prince Elector sat in the midst, his 'brother Robert on the right hand of him, and the Prince d'Amours 'on the left.

'The Mask was very well performed in the dances, scenes, clothing, 'and music, and the Queen was pleased to tell me, at her going away, 'that she liked it very well. Henry Lawes and William Lawes made 'the music. Mr. Corseilles made the scenes.'

doubtless, meant the King's, Queen's, and Prince's players, and the actors at the Salisbury-court theatre. These were the principal associations of performers at the date to which we are now referring.

On an occasion of this kind it was usual for the companies to proceed to the provinces; and, besides the authority they possessed, under their patents and the commission of the Master of the Revels, it seems to have been sometimes thought necessary to obtain from the Lord Chamberlain what was termed 'a Player's Pass.' That which was granted to the King's company on 17th of May (within five days after the temporary closing of the theatres in the metropolis) is extant, in a MS., in the office of the Lord Chamberlain: hence we learn, that at this date the body consisted of about eighteen performers; and as Taylor, Lowen, and Swanston, who were, and continued to be the leaders, are not named in it, we may infer, perhaps, that they did not join in this expedition. It empowers William Pen, Thomas Hobbes, William Trigg, William Patrick, Richard Baxter, Alexander Gough, William Hart and Richard Hawley, 'together with 'ten more, or thereabouts, of their fellows,' to repair 'to all towns corporate, market towns, and other 'where they shall think fit,' to act their 'plays, co-'medies, and interludes' in any 'common halls, moot-'halls, school-houses, or other convenient rooms.' It also appears by the same instrument, that they had been ordered to attend the King in his summer pro-

gress*, when he and the Queen visited Oxford, and there saw Cartwright's play of *The Royal Slave* presented by the students of Christchurch: this performance took place on the 30th of August, 1636, and gave the highest satisfaction.

Thomas Heywood was the author of a Mask presented at rather an unusual season this year: on what day it was first performed is not stated, but it was repeated three times within eight days (as is stated on the title-page), and for the second time on the King's birth-day, 19th of November, 1636, when he was entertained by the Queen at Denmark-house. It was called *Love's Mistress*, and was so much liked, and excited such public attention, that it was subsequently represented by the Queen's comedians at the Cockpit in Drury Lane.

The restraint of players in consequence of the plague was not taken off until the 23rd of February 1636-7: the King, however, kept his Christmas at Hampton Court, and summoned his own players, and others, to attend his service. The King's company was, therefore, obliged, early in December, to return to the vicinity of London, without the liberty of exercising their quality, and consequently without the means of maintaining themselves. This circumstance was taken into consideration by the King, and on the 10th of December, 1636, a Privy Seal was issued, authorising the payment from the Exchequer to Lowen and Taylor

* Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 166.

of an allowance of 20*l.* a-week, in behalf of their associates *.

This brings us to the dramatic performances at Hampton Court during Christmas, 1636-7, A. D. the most remarkable of which was the repetition, on the 12th of January, of Cartwright's *Royal Slave*, which the King and Queen had seen in the summer at Oxford, when it was represented by the students of Christ Church. It appears by the printed copy of the play, that when it was repeated at Hampton Court, it was acted by the King's servants; and there can be little doubt that the court was well pleased with their exertions, because they obtained an extraordinary reward of 30*l.* in consideration, partly, 1637.

* The following is a copy of this document from the original in the Chapter-house, Westminster:—

'BY THE KING.

'Right trustie and welbeloved Cousin, &c. To the Treasurer and 'Under Treasurer of our Exchequer, &c. Whereas we have com- 'manded our Servants, the Players, to assemble their company and 'keepe themselves together neere our Court for our service, and are 'gratiously pleased to give them an allowance of Twenty Pounds by 'the weeke, our will and pleasure is, and we do hereby will and com- 'maund you to pay, or cause to be payd, unto John Lowen and Joseph 'Taylor or their assignes, in the behalf of their company, the some of 'Twenty Pounds by the weeke; the same to commence from the first 'day of November last past, and to contynue during our pleasure, to be 'taken unto them as of our princely bountie, without accompt, im- 'prest or other charge to be sett upon them for the same or any parte 'thereof. And these our letters &c. Given under our Signet, at our 'Honor of Hampton Court, the Tenth day of December in the Twelveth 'yeare of our Raigne.

'FRA. GALLE.'

of its being a new play, which they had to learn for the occasion*. In the whole they received 240*l.* for their exertions at this season, when they performed twenty-two pieces†. Sir H. Herbert states, that the King gave Cartwright 40*l.* as his reward, so that he attended at Hampton Court, on the 12th of January, to take care that his *Royal Slave* was properly got up, and understood by the King's players.

Besides the royal theatrical servants, a company performed, whom Sir H. Herbert calls 'Beeston's boyes,' an expression which he afterwards explains by adding (though Malone has not given the precise date of the entry in the MS.) that 'Mr. Beeston was commanded 'to make a company of boys, and began to play at 'the Cockpit with them the same day.' These were, doubtless, the juvenile performers who exhibited before the King and Queen at Hampton Court, at Christmas, 1636-7, and who, in the MS. office book in the department of the Lord Chamberlain, are called, on the 10th of May, 1637, 'the New Company‡.'

* The *Biographia Dramatica* states (vide *Royal Slave*) that the Queen was mainly instrumental in the repetition of the play at Hampton Court. This may be true; but it is not true (as it adds) that it was performed by 'her own servants,' and that the comparison was in favour of the students of Oxford. It was performed by the King's players, and if it did not please as well at Hampton Court, as it had done at Oxford, it was probably because the zest of novelty was lost.

† '15 March, 1636-7. A warrant for 240*l.* unto his Majesty's 'players—viz. 210*l.* for twenty-one plays acted by them, at 10*l.* a play: 'and 30*l.* more for a new play called *The Royal Slave*.'

‡ '10th May 1637. A warrant for the payment of 150*l.* unto Mr.

We are to understand, therefore, that at this date Christopher Beeston separated himself from the Queen's players, at whose head he had been for some years, in order to undertake the charge and instruction of an independent company of juvenile performers, hereafter called the King's and Queen's young company. A person of the name of Henry Turner became the leader of the Queen's players, on the resignation of Beeston.[1]

The pieces mentioned by Sir Henry Herbert as having been performed at Christmas and Shrovetide, 1636-7, were the following:—

The first part of *Arviragus*, on the 26th Dec.

The second part of *Arviragus*, on the 27th Dec.

Love and Honour, on 1st Jan., Sunday.

The Elder Brother, on 5th Jan.

King and no King, on 10th Jan.

The Royal Slave, on the 12th Jan.

Rollo, on the 24th Jan.

Julius Cæsar, on the 31st Jan.

Cupid's Revenge, by Beeston's boys on the 7th Feb.

A Wife for a Month, by the King's players, on the 9th Feb.

Wit without Money, by Beeston's boys, on the 14th Feb.

[1] 'Christopher Beeston, for plays acted by the Queen's servants—viz. 'Four at Hampton Court, at 20*l.* per play, in 1635—Five at White-'hall in the same year, and two plays acted by the New Company.'

The 'two plays acted by the New Company' were played in January, 1636-7, as appears by Sir H. Herbert's Register, although the date is not here specified.

The Governor, by the King's players, on the 17th Feb.

Philaster, by the King's players, on Shrove Tuesday, the 21st Feb.

This list comprises only thirteen representations, whereas we know from an authority already quoted, that the King's company only, received payment in March, 1636-7, for twenty-two plays. Possibly, although not so expressed, this was the total number they had acted before the court in the course of the preceding year. The Master of the Revels, by some accident, omits to notice the performance of Davenant's *Britannia Triumphans*, 'on the Sunday after twelfth night,' as is stated on the title-page of that production. It was exhibited in a temporary banqueting room of timber, built by Inigo Jones, 'by reason the 'room where they were formerly presented, having 'the ceiling since richly adorned with pieces of paint-'ing of great value, figuring the acts of King James 'of happy memory,' which it was feared would be injured by 'the smoke of so many lights.' The King was a performer in this Mask, with the Duke of Lennox, the Earls of Devonshire, Carlisle *, &c.

* *Britannia Triumphans* has been considered one of the rarest of the Court Masques in this reign, and two copies in Mr. Bindley's sale produced between 8*l.* and 9*l.* each. It is, however, by no means so scarce as has been represented, nor is there sufficient ground for the notion, that it was suppressed because it was represented on the Sabbath day. I only introduce the following lines from it, to show the origin of an often repeated, and supposed anonymous, description of a giant fishing.

It has been observed that the prohibition of stage-plays, &c., in consequence of the plague, was recalled on the 24th of February, 1636-7, as the deaths in London and its vicinity were then only forty-four in the week. This permission only lasted for a few days, for on the first of March the order of suppression was revived; and 'playes, dancing on the ropes, &c.,' (as the entry in the Privy Council Register is worded,) were no longer allowed until the renewed virulence of the malady had abated. It appears on the same authority, that obedience was not paid to it by the parties concerned in the Cockpit theatre, in Drury Lane, and on the 12th of May, 1637, 'a warrant was 'issued to Jasper Heyley, Messenger, to fetch before 'the Lords [of the Privy Council] Christopher and 'William Beeston*, Theophilus Bird, Ezechiel Fenn, A.D. 1637.

'This day (a day as fair as heart could wish)
'This giant stood on shore of sea to fish:
'For angling rod he took a sturdy oak,
'For line a cable that in storm ne'er broke:
'His hook was such as heads the end of pole
'To pluck down house ere fire consumes it whole;
'His hook was baited with a dragon's tail,
'And then on rock he stood to bob for whale.'

This was first stolen by the anonymous author of the burlesque *Hero and Leander*, 1653, 8vo.

* William Beeston seems afterwards to have acquired considerable reputation, and to have become of sufficient importance to induce Francis Kirkman to dedicate to him his romance, translated from the French, called *The Loves and Adventures of Clerio and Lozia*, 1652. The opening of the dedication is this:—

'Divers times in my hearing to the admiration of the whole com-'pany you have most judiciously discoursed of Poesie: which is the 'cause I presume to chuse you for my patron & protector, who are

'and Michael Moone*, with a clause to command the 'keepers of the playhouse called the Cockpit in Drury 'Lane, who either live in it, or have relation to it, not 'to permit plays to be acted there till further order.' Sir H. Herbert mentions nothing of this incident, nor do we know what punishment was inflicted upon the offenders, but they were most likely discharged after a short imprisonment, on an undertaking not again to infringe the direction of the Privy Council. The order continued in force for seven months, permission to act not having been again given until the 2nd of October, 1637.

The MS. in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, under date of the 10th of June, 1637, contains an instrument, for which we have hitherto seen no precedent—against the printing of plays, to the prejudice of the companies to whom they belonged, and by whom they had been bought from the authors. During the suspension of the stage in consequence of the number of deaths, in order to gratify the theatrical avidity of the public, certain printers, who had surreptitiously got manuscript plays into their hands, began to print and publish them. Complaints against them had been before made, and on this occasion the

'the happiest interpreter & judge of our English stage plays, this 'nation ever produced: which the poets and actors of these times can- 'not (without ingratitude) deny; for I have heard the chief & most 'ingenious acknowledge their fames & profits essentially sprung from 'your instruction, judgment, and fancy.'

* This is the first notice of an actor who obtained great distinction after the Restoration, and who, during the civil wars, bore a commission in the King's service as Major Mohun. He acted until 1685.

Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, Lord Chamberlain, addressed a letter to the Stationers' Company, directing that body to interfere to prevent the infringement of the rights of the King's servants, under Lowen and Taylor, and of the King's and Queen's young company under Christopher Beeston. It was required, that no play should be printed without the certificate of the leaders of those companies; and the order, construed strictly, would prevent the publication of any plays, belonging to any other associations of actors, without the certificate of Lowen and Taylor, or of Beeston*.

* The letter of the Lord Chamberlain runs thus (Chalmers' Apol. p. 513):—

'After my hearty commendations. Whereas complaint was hereto-
'fore presented to my dear brother and predecessor by his Majesty's
'servants the players, that some of the Company of Printers and Sta-
'tioners had procured and printed divers of their books of Comedies,
'Tragedies, Interludes, Histories and the like, which they had for the
'special service of his Majesty, and their own use, bought and provided
'at very dear and high rates: By means whereof, not only they them-
'selves had much prejudice, but the books much corruption, to the
'injury and disgrace of the authors; and therupon the Master and
'Wardens of the Company of Printers and Stationers were advised by
'my brother to take notice thereof, and to take order for the stay of
'any further impression of any of the Plays or Interludes of his Ma-
'jesty's servants without their consents; which being a caution given
'with such respect, and grounded on such weighty reasons, both for his
'Majesty's service, and the particular interest of the players, and so
'agreeable to common justice, and that indifferent measure which every
'man would look for in his own particular, it might have been pre-
'sumed, that there would have needed no farther order or direction in
'the business: Notwithstanding which I am informed that some copies

From the 2nd Oct. 1637, when the restraint was taken off, to the 2nd June, 1638, the Register of Sir Henry Herbert is destitute of all information regarding the stage: nevertheless, the performances at Court began on the 30th September, 1637, and continued

'of plays belonging to the King and Queen's servants, the players, and 'purchased by them at dear rates, having been lately stolen, or gotten 'from them by indirect means, are now attempted to be printed, and 'that some of them are at your press and ready to be printed; which, if 'it should be suffered, would directly tend to their apparent detriment 'and great prejudice, and to the disenabling them to do their Majesties 'service: For prevention and redress whereof it is desired, that order be 'given and entered by the Master and Wardens of the Company of 'Printers and Stationers, that if any plays be already entered, or shall 'hereafter be brought into the hall to be entered for printing, that 'notice thereof shall be given to the King's and Queen's servants, 'the players, and an enquiry made of them to whom they do belong, and 'that none be suffered to be printed, until the assent of their Majesty's 'said servants be made appear to the Master and Wardens of the Com-'pany of Printers and Stationers by some certificate in writing, under the 'hands of John Lowen and Joseph Taylor for the King's servants, and 'of Christopher Beeston for the King's and Queen's young company, 'or of such other persons as shall from time to time have direction of 'those companies, which is a course that can be hurtful unto none, but 'such as go about unjustly to avail themselves of other's goods, without 'respect of order or good government: which I [am] confident you 'will be careful to avoid, and therefore I commend it to your special 'care; and if you shall have need of any further authority or power, 'either from his Majesty or the Council Table, the better to enable 'you in the execution thereof, upon notice given to me, either by your-'selves or by the players, I will endeavour to apply that further 'remedy thereto, which shall be requisite. And so &c. Dated the 10th 'June, 1637. P[embroke] and M[ontgomery].

'To the Master and Wardens of the
'Company of Printers and Stationers.'

until the 3rd February, 1637-8; and in that period the King's actors, under Lowen, Taylor, and Swanston, played fourteen pieces before the King, while the Prince's servants were called upon to contribute their exertions upon three occasions, in November and December, 1637*. We have no means of supplying the titles of any of the plays performed.

Two Masks were presented at Christmas and Shrovetide, 1637-8, which appear to have A. D. been as costly as usual. For the first, which 1638. was called the King's Mask, Edmund Taverner, Esq. had a warrant on Dec. 1, 1637, for 1400*l.*, 'to be 'employed towards the charge of our Mask, to be pre-'sented at our court at Whitehall on Twelfth-night 'next:' on the 13th Dec., a warrant under Privy Seal was also issued to George Kirke, Esq. Gentleman of

* The MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, so often cited in these Annals, includes the following particulars relative to these seventeen performances:—

'15 March, 1637–8. A warrant for 150*l.* to John Lowen, Joseph 'Taylor, and Elliard Swanston, or any of them, for them-'selves and the rest of the company of his Majesty's 'players, for 14 plays acted before his Majesty, between 'the 30th Sept. and the 3rd Feb. following, 1637–8; 'one whereof was at Hampton-court, for which 20*l.* is 'allowed: the rest at the usual allowance of 10*l.* a play.

'21 March, 1637–8. A warrant for 40*l.* unto Joseph Moore, for 'himself and the rest of the Prince's players, for 3 plays 'acted before his Highness, &c. in Nov. and Dec. last: 'one whereof was at Richmond, for which was allowed '20*l.*, in consideration of their travel and remove of 'goods.'

the Robes, for 150*l.*, 'for providing masking apparel for our own person.' The warrant for the Queen's Mask at Shrovetide was also for 1400*l.*, and it was issued to Michael Oldisworth, Esq. The original documents are in the Chapter-house, Westminster.

It is dangerous to attempt to form general conclusions from insulated facts: were it at all safe to do so, we might conclude, that in the spring of 1637-8, the theatres were well attended, for in the Diary of Sir H. Mildmay the subsequent entry is found;—'3 Feb. 1637-8 came home dirty and weary, the playe being full.'—Under date of 26th Oct. 1638, he registers in his account-book that he saw 'The Foxe playe, with Fra. Wortley,' and it cost him, on that occasion, the then extraordinary sum of 4*s.* 6*d.* This was probably at the Globe, as Ben Jonson's *Fox* belonged to the King's company. In the winter Sir H. Mildmay usually visited the Blackfriars or Cockpit, and it was no doubt one of those two houses that he found full in the February preceding, when, being 'dirty and weary,' he wished to recreate himself at the theatre.

King Charles seems to have taken a minute and peculiar interest in all matters that related to the drama. In 1633 he had interfered in order to prevent the Master of the Revels from expunging from Davenant's *Wits* all expressions of force and character, in the nature of asseverations, which Sir H. Herbert considered oaths; and two years afterwards, at the request of Sir H. Herbert, he interested himself in the

filling up of one of the minor appointments in the Revels*.

Under the date of June, 1638, and in connexion with a play by Massinger now lost, first called *the King and the Subject*, and afterwards (as Malone supposes†) *the Tyrant*, Sir Henry Herbert's Register presents us with an incident that is rather to be looked upon as a matter of general history, than belonging only and peculiarly to the stage. The King's difficulties to raise supplies, by ship-money, and afterwards

* This trait in the King's character is given by Sir Henry Herbert in the following words.

'The same day (22d Feb., 1635) at Whitehall, I acquainted King 'Charles, my master, with the danger of Mr. Hunt's sickness, and 'moved his Majesty, in case he died, that he would be pleased to give 'me leave to commend a fit man to succeed him, in his place of Yeo-'man of the Revels. The King told me that till then he knew not 'that Will Hunt held a place in the Revels. To my request he was 'pleased to give me this answer: Well, says the King, I will not 'dispose of it, or it shall not be disposed of 'till I hear you. *Ipsissimis 'verbis;* which I enter here as full of grace, and for my better remem-'brance, since my master's custom affords not so many words, nor so 'significant.'

It may be added, that probably the illness of Hunt was protracted, because it does not seem that the vacancy above contemplated occurred until 1639. On the 21st October of that year, Joseph Taylor, who had been so long one of the leaders of the King's players, was appointed 'Yeoman of the Revels to his Majesty in ordinary, in the place of William Hunt, deceased.' The salary was 6*d. per diem*, payable quarterly, together with such other fees and emoluments as William Hunt, or his predecessors, had enjoyed. *Vide* Chalmers' *Apol.* p. 503; where the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office is quoted respecting this circumstance.

† Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 230.

from the clergy, are well known; and it seems that a play by Massinger, the scene of which was laid in Spain, having been sent to the Master of the Revels for allowance, containing passages objectionable on account of the spirit and temper of the time, it found its way, intermediately perhaps, into the King's own hands: what occurred regarding it, is thus related by Sir H. Herbert.

'Received of Mr. Lowens, for my pains about 'Messinger's play, called the King and the Subject, '2nd June, 1638, 1*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.*

'The name of the King and the Subject is altered, 'and I allowed the play to be acted, the reformations 'most strictly observed, and not otherwise, the 5th of 'June, 1638.

'At Greenwich, the 4th of June, Mr. W. Murray 'gave me power from the King to allow of the play, 'and told me that he would warrant it.

'Monies? We'll raise supplies what ways we please,
'And force you to subscribe to blanks, in which
'We'll mulct you as we shall think fit. The Cæsars
'In Rome were wise, acknowledging no laws
'But what their swords did ratify; the wives
'And daughters of the Senators bowing to
'Their wills as deities,' &c.

'This is a piece taken out of Phillip Massinger's 'play, called The King and the Subject, and entered 'here for ever to be remembered by my son, and those 'that cast their eyes upon it, in honour of King 'Charles, my master, who, reading over the play at

'Newmarket, set his mark upon the place with his 'own hand, and in these words,

'This is too insolent, and to be changed.'

'Note, that the poet makes it the speech of a King, 'Don Pedro, King of Spain, and spoken to his 'subjects.'

In the course of this year, but at what particular dates is not specified, the King's players acted twenty-four times before the court, six times at Hampton Court and Richmond, and eighteen times at Whitehall. As for the first, 20*l.* per play, and for the last, 10*l.* per play were allowed, the total sum due was 300*l.*, and for this a warrant was made out on the 12th of March, 1638-9, and given to Taylor, Lowen and Swanston, for themselves and the rest of the company *. Sir H. Herbert furnishes no information, either regarding these representations or any others, public or private, between the 5th of June, 1638, and the 9th of April, 1640. In consequence of the death of Sir John Astley he became Master of the Revels in his own right, and by virtue of the reversion he had secured, in January, 1639-40 †.

The transactions connected with the stage during this interval were, however, more than usually interesting. On the 26th of March, 1638-9, Davenant

* MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's Office.

† In consequence of ill health, on the 20th of March, 1637-8, Sir J. Astley (called Ashley in the Privy Seal in the Chapter House) obtained a licence to reside in London, 'or where he pleases, whether at Christmas or at other times,' contrary to a former order, directing that the nobility and gentry, who had mansion-houses in the country, should repair to them 'to keep hospitality meet for their degrees.'

(to whom, in the December preceding, had been granted
A. D. the annuity of 100*l.* formerly given to Ben
1639. Jonson as Poet Laureat) obtained letters-patent under the great seal for the erection of a new theatre within the boundary of the city of London, upon a piece of ground described as lying at the back of the Three Kings' Ordinary in Fleet-street, in the parish of St. Dunstan's in the West, or in the parish of St. Bride's, or on 'any other ground in or about that place.' This playhouse was to have been 120 feet square, and consequently would have been the largest in the metropolis or its neighbourhood*. As we shall see hereafter, this project was never carried into execution, and Davenant was obliged to relinquish the privilege he had obtained.

No fewer than thirty-one plays were acted at court between June, 1638, and April, 1640. Of these, seven were by the Queen's players, under Henry Turner, for which they received 80*l.*; one-and-twenty by the King's players under Lowen, Taylor and Swanston, for which they received 230*l.*; and three by the Prince's players, under Moore and Cane, for which they received 60*l.* The pieces performed at Richmond were, as formerly, paid for at the rate of 20*l.* each, and the pieces at Whitehall at the rate of 10*l.* each†.

Masks were also presented at Twelfthtide and

* The Fortune, which was the largest theatre, was only eighty feet square, before it was burnt in 1621.

† These details were derived by Chalmers (*Apol.* p. 511) from the MS. in the office of the Lord Chamberlain.

Shrovetide. On the 3d of January, 1639-40, a warrant was issued to Michael Oldisworth for 1400*l.* towards 'defraying the charge of the scene, masking habits, 'and other expences of the mask, to be presented by 'us, and our dearest consort the Queen, at Twelfthtide 'next.' The King's dress for the mask at Shrovetide cost 120*l.*, as appears by a warrant for that sum to George Kirke, Gent. of the Robes, 'for masking apparel for our own wearing.' This Privy Seal is dated 17th of January, 1639-40; but there is no account extant of the cost of any other part of the preparations.

Christopher Beeston continued but for a short time at the head of the King's and Queen's young company, for, in August, 1639, he had been succeeded by William Beeston (probably his brother), who was then extremely anxious to secure to himself, and to the juvenile players under him, the sole right of performing a certain number of plays, most of which had belonged to the Queen's players while they continued at the Cockpit. Beeston, on succeeding to the theatre, succeeded to the plays also; but he seems to have feared, that, as the Queen's players no longer acted at the Cockpit, his claim would be disputed. He therefore appears to have had sufficient interest with the Lord Chamberlain to induce him to put forth an order, commanding 'all governors and masters of play-houses' to refrain from acting all and any of the plays enumerated*.

* The list is valuable, and the document itself, on account of its

About the year 1635, the Prince's players, who had been stationed at the Salisbury Court theatre soon after 1629, were performing at the Fortune in Golding

novelty, is worth subjoining. It is from the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office:—

'Whereas William Bieston, Gent. Governor, &c. of the King's and 'Queen's young Company of Players at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, 'hath represented unto his Majesty, that the several plays hereafter 'mentioned (viz.) Witt without Money; The Night Walkers; The 'Knight of the burning Pestill; Father's owne Sonne; Cupid's Re-'venge; The Bondman; The Renegado; A New way to pay Debts; 'The Great Duke of Florence; The Maid of Honor; The Traytor; 'The Example; The Young Admirall; The Oportunity; A Witty 'fayre one; Love's Cruelty; The Wedding; The Maid's Revenge; 'The Lady of Pleasure; The Schoole of Complement; The Grateful 'Servant; The Coronation; Hide Parke; Philip Chabot Admiral of 'France; A Mad Couple well matt; All's loss by Lust; The Change-'ling; A fayre Quarrell; The Spanish Gypsie; The World; The 'Sunne's Darling; Love's Sacrifice; 'Tis Pitty shee's a Whore; 'George a greene; Love's Mistress; The Cunning Lovers; The 'Rape of Lucrese; A Trick to cheat the Devill; A Foole and her 'Maydenhead soon parted; King John and Matilda; A Citty Night 'Cap; The Bloody Banquett; Cupid's Vagaries; The Conceited Duke; 'and Appius and Virginia, do all and every of them properly and of 'right belong to the said house, and consequently that they are all in 'his propriety. And to the end that any other company of actors, in 'or about London, shall not presume to act any of them to the preju-'dice of him the said William Bieston and his company—His Majesty 'hath signified his royal pleasure unto me, thereby requiring me to 'declare so much to all other companies of actors hereby concernable, 'that they are not any ways to intermeddle with, or act any of the 'above-mentioned plays. Whereof I require all masters and governors 'of playhouses, and all others whom it may concern to take notice and 'to forbear to impeach the said William Bieston in the premises, as they 'tender his Majesty's displeasure and will answer the contempt.

'Dated 10th August, 1639.'

Lane; but, prior to September, 1639, they were playing at the Red Bull in St. John's Street: the cause of these changes is unknown*. On the 29th of the month above-mentioned, representations were made against them to the Privy Council, in consequence of their having brought out a piece called *The Whore New Vamped*, in which personal allusion was made to

* They were not of long continuance, for Sir H. Herbert tells us, that at Easter 1640, the Prince's company returned to the Fortune, and 'the Fortune company' went to the Red Bull. He does not state of whose players the Fortune company at that time consisted, but they were probably the Queen's servants, who had been under Christopher Beeston, until he became Governor of the King's and Queen's young company. See Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 241. On p. 79 of the same volume, Malone has quoted, for a different purpose, the following prologue by J. Tatham, 'upon the removing of the late Fortune players to the Bull' from *Fancies Theatre*, 1640.

'Here, gentlemen, our anchors fixed; and we,
'Disdaining Fortunes mutability,
'Expect your kind acceptance: then we'll sing
'(Protected by your smiles, our ever spring)
'As pleasant as if we had still possest
'Our lawful portion out of Fortune's breast.
'Only we would request you to forbear
'Your wonted custom, banding tile and pear
'Against our curtains to allure us forth.
'I pray take notice, these are of more worth—
'Pure Naples silk not worsted. We have ne'er
'An actor here has mouth enough to tear
'Language by the ears. This forlorn hope shall be
'By us refin'd from such gross injury;
'And then let your judicious loves advance
'Us to our merits, them to their ignorance.'

Hence we see, that at the Red Bull they had silk curtains, and probably the house was better furnished, and more ornamented in other respects, than the Fortune.

an alderman of London, who had been a blacksmith in Holborn, and some general abuse thrown upon proctors. The State Paper Office contains a singular document upon this subject, in which the objectionable parts of the play are pointed out; but, from the statement there made, it seems very doubtful whether the author (whoever he might be) or the Master of the Revels were at all to blame: the expressions, against which complaint was made, appear rather to have been foisted in by Andrew Cane, the actor, whose name has been before met with in connection with the company called the Prince's players. The commencement of the document in the State Paper Office is considerably damaged, and some words are obliterated; but, as a copy of this portion of it is found in the Registers of the Privy Council, the deficiencies are accurately supplied in the transcript contained in the note below*.

* 'Order touching the Players at the Red Bull.

'At the Court at Whitehall, 29th September, 1639.

'Present, the King's most excellent Majesty.

'Whereas complaint was this day made to his Majesty sitting in 'Council, that the stage players of the Red Bull have lately, for many 'days together, acted a scandalous and libellous play, wherein they have 'audaciously reproached, and in a libellous manner traduced and per-'sonated, not only some of the Aldermen of the City of London, and 'other persons of quality, but also scandalized and defamed the whole 'profession of Proctors belonging to the Court of Civil Law, and re-'flected upon the present Government: it was ordered, that Mr. 'Attorney General should be hereby prayed and requested forthwith 'to call before him, not only the poet that made the said play, and the 'actors that played the same, but also the person who licensed it, and 'having diligently examined the truth of the same complaint, to pro-

The play which thus attracted the attention of the King and of the Privy Council, has not survived.

In the Autumn of 1639, Davenant was obliged to relinquish the patent granted him in the spring of the same year, for building a theatre behind the Three King's ordinary in Fleet street, or in that immediate neighbourhood: the original letters-patent are recited in an indenture, by which Davenant consented not to erect any such building. Why the royal permission thus given was withdrawn remains unexplained *.

' ceed roundly against such of them as he shall find to have been ' faulty, and to use such effectual expedition to bring them to sentence, ' as that their exemplary punishment may prevent such insolencies ' betimes.'

The ground of offence was stated to be the following.

In the play called 'The Whore New Vamped,' where there was mention of the new duty upon wines, one that personates a justice of the peace says to Cane, 'Sirrah, I'll have you before the Alderman:' whereto Cane replied in these words, *viz.*, 'The Alderman! The Alder-' man is a base, drunken, sottish knave, I care not for the Alderman; ' I say the Alderman is a base, drunken, sottish knave:' another said, ' How now, Sirrah, what Alderman do you speak of?' then Cane said, ' I mean Alderman, the blacksmith in Holborn:'—said the other, ' Was he not a vintner?' Cane answered, ' I know no other.'

In another part of the same play, Cane, speaking of projects and patents that he had gotten, among the rest, said that he had a patent for twelve-pence a-piece upon every proctor and proctor's man that was not a knave:—said another, 'Was there ever known any proctor, but he was an errant knave?'

* Chalmers (Suppl. Apol. p. 187,) says, that the project was defeated ' on some disagreement with the Earl of Arundel, the landlord,' but this fact no where appears, and it seems much more probable, that the growth of puritanical notions regarding the stage, and perhaps the in-

Between the 10th of November, 1640, and the 22d of February 1640-1, plays for the representation of

terference of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, induced the King to withdraw his letters-patent. The following is the indenture by which Davenant yielded his right into the hands of the Crown.

'This Indenture made the second day of October, in the fifteenth 'year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles by the grace of God 'of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith '&c. Annoq. Dm 1639. Between the said King's most Excellent 'Ma^ty of the first part, and William Davenant, of London Gent. of 'the other part. Whereas the said King's most excellent Ma^ty: by 'his Highness Letters patents under the great Seal of England, bear-'ing date the six and twentieth day of March last past before the date 'of these prèsents, did give and grant unto the said William Davenant 'his Heirs, Executors, Administrators and Assigns, full power license and 'authority that he they and every of them, by him and themselves, and by 'all and every such person or persons as he or they shall depute or ap-'point, and his and their labourers servants and workmen, shall and may 'lawfully quietly and peaceably frame, erect, new build, and set up upon 'a parcel of ground lying near unto or behind the three Kings Ordinary 'in Fleet Street in the Parish of St. Dunstan's in the West, London, 'or in St. Brides London, or in either of them, or in any other ground 'in or about that place or in the whole street aforesaid, already allotted 'to him for that use, or in any other place that is or hereafter shall be 'assigned and allotted out to the said William Davenant by the Right 'Honor^ble: Thomas Earl of Arundel and Surrey, Earl Marshal of Eng-'land, or any other His Ma^ts: Commissioners for building for the time 'being in that behalf, a Theatre or Playhouse with necessary tiring and 'retiring rooms, and other places convenient, containing in the whole 'forty yards square at the most, wherein plays musical entertainments, 'scenes, or other the like presentments, may be presented by and under 'certain provisoes or conditions in the same contained, as in and by the 'said letters patents, whereunto relation being had more fully and at 'large, it doth and may appear: Now this Indenture witnesseth, and the 'said William Davenant doth by these presents declare his Majesty's

which 160*l.* were paid to Lowen, Taylor and Swanston, were performed before the King, Queen and Prince. It is to be observed that this is the latest extant warrant

'intent meaning at and upon the granting of the said License was
'and is, that he the said William Davenant, his Heirs Executors
'Administrators nor Assigns, should not frame, build, or set up
'the said Theatre or Playhouse in any place inconvenient, and that
'the said parcel of ground lying near unto or behind the Three Kings
'Ordinary in Fleet Street, in the said parish of St. Dunstans in the
'West London, or in St. Brides London, or in either of them or in any
'other ground in or about that place, or in the whole street aforesaid,
'and is sithence found inconvenient and unfit for that purpose: there-
'fore the said William Davenant doth for himself, his Heirs Executors
'Administrators and Assigns, and every of them, covenant promise and
'agree to and with our said Sovereign Lord the King, his Heirs and
'Successors, that he the said William Davenant, his Heirs Executors
'Administrators nor Assigns, shall not nor will not, by virtue of the said
'License and Authority to him granted as aforesaid, frame, erect, new
'build, or set up upon the said parcel of ground in Fleet-street aforesaid,
'or in any other part of Fleet-street, a Theatre or Playhouse, nor will
'not frame, erect, new build, or set up upon any other parcel of ground
'lying in or near the Cities [q. liberties] or Suburbs of the Cities of Lon-
'don or Westminster, any Theatre or Playhouse unless the said place
'shall be first approved and allowed by warrant under his Majesty's
'sign manual, or by writing under the hand and seal of the said Right
'Honourable Thomas Earl of Arundel and Surrey. In witness whereof
'to the one part of this Indenture the said William Davenant hath
'set his hand and seal, the day and year first above written.

'William Davenant, L. S.

'Signed Sealed and delivered
'in the presence of
'Edw. Penruddoks.
'Michael Baker.'

issued for such a purpose prior to the civil wars, and it bears date on the 20th of March, 1640-1*.

Although Sir H. Herbert renews his notices of the drama in his Register in the month of April, 1640, he says nothing of these exhibitions by the King's company at court. He informs us, that on the 9th of April, 1640, the Lord Chamberlain 'bestowed a play 'upon the King and Queen, called *Cleodora, Queen of 'Arragon*, made by my cousin Abington' [Habington]; and he adds that 'it was performed by my 'Lord's servants out of his own family, and his 'charge in the clothes and scenes, which were very 'rich and curious.' The representation was made in the hall at Whitehall, and 'the King and Queen '(according to the Master of the Revels) commended 'the general entertainment, as very well acted and 'well set out.' He does not mention any praises bestowed upon his cousin the author; but the piece on the whole was so well liked, that 'it was acted a 'second time in the same place, before the King and 'Queen.' This second performance was probably by the regular players of the King, as *The Queen of Arragon* was subsequently exhibited at the Blackfriars theatre†.

* It is found in the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office, already so frequently referred to.

† It was printed in folio in 1640 under the title of *The Queen of Arragon*, and not *Cleodora, the Queen of Arragon*, as it is given by Sir H. Herbert. In the printed copy the heroine is throughout called

The King's and Queen's 'young company' under William Beeston, in May, 1640, fell under the displeasure of the court, for performing a play that had not received the licence of the Master of the Revels. Charles I. projected a journey against the Scots in March, 1640, and he personally complained to Sir H. Herbert, that the piece thus represented by 'Beeston's Boys,' at the Cockpit, 'had relation to the passages of the King's journey into the North,' and he commanded the Master of the Revels 'to punish the offenders.' On the 4th of May William Beeston was arrested under a warrant from the Lord Chamberlain, and committed to the Marshalsea, and the company of which he was governor was at the same time commanded 'to forbear playing, for playing when they were forbidden' by Sir H. Herbert, 'and for other disobedience.' The offence, therefore, was that Sir H. Herbert, upon the King's complaint, had ordered the actors to discontinue their performances, with which order they had refused to comply; but they were not treated with much severity, for, after lying still on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, they were permitted to recommence their performances on Thursday; and Sir H. Herbert tells us, with apparent satisfaction at the acknowledgment and exercise of his power, 'at my Lord Chamberlain's entreaty I gave 'them their liberty, and upon their petition of submis-'sion, subscribed by the players, I restored them to

'the Queen.' It is accompanied by a prologue and epilogue 'at court,' and 'at the Friars.'

'their liberty on Thursday.' We might infer from hence, that all the players had been arrested, as well as Beeston; the first expression, 'gave them their liberty,' meaning that he set them at large, and the repetition, 'restored them to their liberty,' meaning that he permitted them again to act*.

This instance of insubordination was followed in the next month by the removal of William Beeston, a circumstance omitted to be recorded by Sir H. Herbert, but of which the evidence is indisputable: Dave-

* The following document from the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office refers to part of this transaction. The warrant for the arrest of William Beeston on the day following its date, is not extant:—

'Whereas William Bieston, and the company of players of the Cock-'pit in Drury Lane, have lately acted a new play without any license 'from the Master of his Majesty's Revells, and being commanded to 'forbear playing or acting of the same play by the said Master of the 'Revells, and commanded likewise to forbear all manner of playing, 'have notwithstanding, in contempt of the authority of the said Master 'of the Revells, and the power granted unto him under the great seal of 'England, acted the said play and others, to the prejudice of his Ma-'jesty's service, and in contempt of the office of the Revells [whereby] 'he and they, and all other companies, ever have been and ought to be 'governed and regulated: These are therefore, in his Majesties name, 'and signification of his royal pleasure, to command the said William 'Bieston and the rest of that company of the Cockpit players, from 'henceforth and upon sight hereof, to forbear to act any plays whatso-'ever, until they shall be restored by the said Master of the Revells 'unto their former liberty. Whereof all parties concernable are to 'take notice, and conform accordingly, as they and every one of them 'will answer it at their peril. Dated the 3d of May, 1640.

'To Wm Bieston, George Estoteville, and
'the rest of the Company of Players at
'the Cockpit in Drury Lane.'

nant was appointed governor of the King's and Queen's company at the Cockpit in his stead, and in the outset of the instrument, the disorganization of the body, when under the charge of William Beeston, is mentioned as the cause of the change*.

Some time after this event, perhaps in 1641, but at what precise date cannot now be fixed, William Bees-

* Malone (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 242) asserts that Davenant was appointed 'governor of the King's and Queen's company acting at the Cockpit' on the death of Christopher Beeston: it was, in fact, on the removal of William Beeston, as is established by the following document:—

'Whereas in the playhouse or theatre commonly called the Cockpit 'in Drury-lane, there are a company of players or actors authorized 'by me (as Lord Chamberlain to his Majesty) to play or act under the 'title of the King's and Queen's servants, and that by reason of some 'disorders, lately amongst them committed, they are disabled in their 'service and quality: These are therefore to signify, that by the same 'authority I do authorize and appoint William Davenant, Gent., one of 'her Majesty's servants, for me and in my name, to take into his 'government and care the said company of players, to govern, order and 'dispose of them for action, and presentments, and all their affairs in the 'said house, as in his discretion shall seem best to conduce to his 'Majesty's service in that quality. And I do hereby enjoin and com-'mand them, all and every of them, that are so authorized to play in the 'said house under the privilege of his or her Majesty's servants, and 'every one belonging, as prentices or servants, to those actors to play 'under the said privilege, that they obey the said Mr. Davenant and fol-'low his orders and directions as they will answer the contrary: which 'power or privilege he is to continue and enjoy during that lease which 'Mrs. Elizabeth Bieston, *alias* Hucheson, hath or doth hold in the said 'playhouse: Provided he be still accountable to me for his care and 'well ordering the said company. Given under my hand and seal this '27th June, 1640.

'P. and M.'

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ton applied to the Master of the Revels for his authority 'to continue the house, called Salisbury Court playhouse, in [as] a playhouse,' and obtained permission for the purpose; but, in consequence of the former disobedience of Beeston to his authority, Sir H. Herbert was most careful in his licence to assert and specify his various powers, as they regarded theatres and players*.

A. D. 1642. The day after the King made his extraordinary and impolitic visit to the House of Commons to demand the five members, *viz.*, on Twelfth-

* This license is without date, and was found by Malone among the loose papers of Sir H. Herbert: he thought that the time when it was written was June, 1660, but there is no sufficient reason for supposing it to be of so late a date by perhaps nearly twenty years, although Sir H. Herbert might use it in 1660 as a piece of evidence for the purpose of re-establishing his then disputed authority. It runs thus:—

'For Mr. William Beeston.

'Whereas the allowance of plays, the ordering of players and playmakers, and the permission for erecting of playhouses, hath, time out 'of minde whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, belonged 'to the Master of his Maties office of the Revells; And whereas Mr. 'William Beeston hath desired authority and lycence from mee to con-'tinue the house called Salisbury Court playhouse in a playhouse, 'which was formerly built and erected into a playhouse by the permis-'sion and lycence of the Master of the Revells.

'These are therefore, by virtue of a grant under the great seal of 'England, and of the constant practice thereof, to continue and con-'stitute the said house, called Salisbury Court playhouse, into a play-'house, and to authorize and lycence the said Mr. Beeston to sett, lett, 'or use it for a playhouse, wherein comedies, tragedies, tragicomedies, 'pastoralls, and interludes, may be acted. Provided that noe persons be 'admitted to act in the said playhouse, but such as shall be allowed 'by the Master of his Maties office of the Revells. Given under my 'hand and seale of the office of the Revells, this'——

day 1641-2, *The Scornfull Lady* was performed at the Cockpit in Whitehall: the King and Queen were in no mood to be present, but the Prince was there, and Sir H. Herbert adds that 'it was the only play acted at court in the whole Christmas*.' The latest entries in

* By a warrant in the Chapter-house, dated the 17th of April, 1641, exempting the King's musicians from the payment of subsidies, it appears that they were then no less than fifty-eight in number.

The Musicians for wind-instruments were these: Jerome Lanier, Clement Lanier, Anthony Bassano, Andrew Carrier, Robert Baker, Peter Guy, Alphonso Ferabosco, Henry Ferabosco, Thomas Mell, William Gregory, William Lanier, Thomas Snowsman, Richard Blagrave, Henry Bassano, Christopher Bell, John Mason, Robert Strong, Francis Smith, and John Strong.

Musicians for the violins—Thomas Lupo, Thomas Watren, Leonard Mell, John Hopper, Davies Mell, Nicholas Pikard, Stephen Nau, Richard Dorney, James Woodington, Simon Nau, Ambrose Byland, Theophilus Lupo, Bastian Lapiere, and George Turgis.

Musicians for the Waytes—Nicholas Lanier, Master of Music—Nicholas Duvall, John Coggeshall, John Lanier, John Kelly, John Taylor, Anthony Roberts, Thomas Foord, John Drew, Edward Wormall, William Lawes, John Wilson, Deitricht Steefkin, John Fox, Giles Tomkins, Lewis Evans, Philip Squire, Daniel Tarrant, Timothy Collins, John Friend, Robert Douland, Robert Tomkins, Charles Collman, Thomas Warwick, and Mons. La Stelle.

Besides these musicians the King kept a serjeant trumpeter, and eighteen trumpeters, as part of his household.

By a similar warrant, of the 20th of April, 1641, we find that the following was the establishment of the Chapel Royal.

Subdean—Stephen Boughton.

Chaplains—Anthony Kirby, Richard Cotten, Ezechiel Wade, Edmond Nelham, Roger Nightingale, and John Frost.

Gentlemen of the Chapel—Thomas Day, John Woodeson, William Nest, George Cooke, George Sheffield, Walter Porter, Thomas Tomkins, Ralph Amner, Thomas Piers, John Cobb, Richard Portman,

his Register relate to two plays by a dramatist of the name of Kirke, only one piece by whom has reached us in a printed form.

'June, 1642. Received of Mr. Kirke, for a new 'play, which I burnt for the ribaldry and offence that 'was in it, 2*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.*

'Received of Mr. Kirke, for another new play, 'called *The Irish Rebellion*, the 8th of June, 1642, '2*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.*'

Sir H. Herbert adds, after noticing this last act of his authority, 'here ended my allowance of plays, for the war began in August, 1642.' The first rencontre, in fact, took place on the 22nd of September of that year.

On the 2nd of September had been issued 'an 'Ordinance of both Houses of Parliament, for the 'suppressing of public stage plays throughout the 'kingdom during these calamitous times*.' It was in the following form:—

John Harding, Henry Lawes, Richard Boughton, Thomas Rayment, Richard Sandy, Nathaniel Pownall, George Millbourne, Thomas Hazzard, Richard Jennings, Thomas Warwick, Richard Walkins, Matthew Peare, William Webb, and William Cross.

Besides the yeoman and grooms of the Chapel.

* Harl. MSS., 581. It was succeeded, on the 5th of May 1643, by a resolution 'that the book concerning the enjoying and tolerating of sports upon the Lord's day be forthwith burned by the hand of the common hangman in Cheapside and other usual places.' It was farther directed, that the Sheriffs of London should 'see the books burned,' and on the 10th of May the order was carried into execution. Harl. MSS. 581.

'AN ORDINANCE OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS
'CONCERNING STAGE-PLAYS.

'Whereas the distressed estate of Ireland, steeped in 'her own blood, and the distracted estate of England, 'threatened with a cloud of blood by a civil war, call 'for all possible means to appease and avert the wrath 'of God appearing in these judgments: amongst which 'fasting and prayer, having been often tried to be very 'effectual, have been lately and are still enjoined: and 'whereas public sports do not well agree with public 'calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of 'humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious 'solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, 'too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and 'levity: it is therefore thought fit and ordained by the 'Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, 'that while these sad causes and set-times of humilia- 'tion do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and 'be forborne. Instead of which are recommended to 'the people of this land the profitable and seasonable 'considerations of repentance, reconciliation and peace 'with God, which probably will produce outward 'peace and prosperity, and bring again times of joy 'and gladness to these nations. 'Sept. 2. 1642.'

We have distinct proof of only one infraction of this ordinance, which in its form was temporary, although by the framers, perhaps, intended to be permanently enforced. It seems to have originated, not merely in a spirit of religious dislike to dramatic

performances, but in a politic caution, lest play-writers and players should avail themselves of their power over the minds of the people to instil notions and opinions hostile to the authority of a puritanical Parliament. The infraction of the ordinance took place rather more than two years after it was published, viz. on the 6th October, 1644, when some players were disturbed at the Salisbury-court Theatre, while performing Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and no King*. The Sheriffs of London dispersed the audience, and seized the person of at least one of the performers, whose name was Reade, and who was at that time an actor of clowns' parts of great reputation*.

* He is made one of the speakers in a very curious tract, sold among Fillingham's books in 1805, which afterwards came into the hands of Messrs. Longman and Co., and was by them disposed of to a great collector, in whose close custody it now remains: it is entitled, 'The Stage-Player's Complaint, in a pleasant Dialogue between 'Cane of the *Fortune*, and Reed of the *Friars*. Deploring their sad 'and solitary conditions, for want of employment in this heavy and 'contagious time of the plague in London.' It is without date, but it was probably published during the plague of 1625, when Reed belonged to the Blackfriars company, though in 1644 he was playing at Salisbury Court. He is thus mentioned in the preludium to Goffe's *Careless Shepherdess*, printed in 1656, when the theatre was upon the point of reviving. The Landlord is enlarging upon the excellence of having a fool in every act of a play, and upon the laughter produced by the actor in the part of the *Changling*, in Middleton's play of that name. Thrift, a citizen, joins heartily in these commendations of the fool, and adds,

'I'd rather see him leap, laugh, or cry,
'Than hear the gravest speech in all the play.
'I never saw *Rheade* peeping through the curtain,
'But ravishing joy entered into my heart.'

We have no account of the result of this transaction, nor whether Reade sustained any farther punishment.

The account-book and diary of Sir H. Mildmay establish, that plays were performed even in 1643, although he does not insert the names of them: there are, however, only two items applicable to the year, and one of those is questionable:—

		£.	s.	d.
20 Aug., 1643.	To a playe & other foleyes	0	2	1
16 Nov., 1643.	To a playe of warre	0	0	6

This 'play of war' was perhaps, a fencing match between two swordsmen, at one of the theatres, and not a representation of a dramatic kind. In the diary, Sir H. Mildmay is more explanatory as to the last entry above given: the terms he uses are these:—'16 Nov.,-1643. Att home to dynner, and then with 'company to a play, where was a disaster.'—Here we are left in the dark, as to the nature of the 'disaster:' if the 'play' were a contest between two fencers, 'playing a prize,' as it was termed, the disaster

The last actor before the civil wars, who obtained reputation in the part of the Changling, was an actor of the name of Robins, whose name has already occurred, and regarding whom I meet with the following notice in a tract before quoted. He is there mentioned in conjunction with two other celebrated performers.—'We need not 'any more stage-plays: we thank them [the Puritans] for suppressing 'them; they save us money; for I'll undertake we can laugh as 'heartily at Foxley, Peters, and others of their godly ministers, as ever 'we did at Cane at the Red Bull, Tom Pollard in the Humourous 'Lieutenant, Robins in the Changling, or any humourist of them all.' *A Key to the Cabinet of the Parliament*, 1648.

might be an accident which befel one of them: if the 'play,' on the other hand, were the performance of a drama, it is possible that Sir H. Mildmay, by the 'disaster,' refers to some interruption by the Sheriffs, or soldiery, in the course of the representation. The price of admission being six-pence, may favour the notion that it was only a fencing-match.

Just before Christmas, 1642-3, came out a satirical pamphlet in favour of the Cavaliers, and in ridicule of the Parliamentarians, which refers to the Ordinance of Suppression of the 2d September, and shews that, even thus early in the contest, many of the players had entered the royal service, naming one in particular, William Trig, who had obtained a Captain's commission, and who, we have seen, was one of the King's players in 1636. The tract is called *Certaine Propositions offered to the consideration of the Honourable Houses of Parliament*, and is without the name of any printer: it contains the following, as its fifth proposition:—

'That being [seeing] your sage counsels have thought 'fit to vote down stage players, root and branch, but 'many, even of the well-affected to that reformation, 'have found, and hope hereafter to find, play-houses 'most convenient and happy places of meeting; and 'that now in this bag-pipe, minstrelsy week (I mean 'this red pack of leizure days that is coming), there 'must be some enterludes, whether you will or no, 'you would be pleased to declare yourselves, that you 'never meant to take away the calling of stage-plays,

'but reform the abuse of it: that is, that they bring no 'profane plots, but take them out of the Scripture all, '(as that of Joseph and his Brethren would make 'the ladies weep; that of David and his troubles 'would do pretty well for the present; and doubtless 'Susannah and the two Elders would be a scene that 'would take above any that was ever yet presented). 'It would not be amiss, too, if, instead of the music 'that plays between acts, there were only a Psalm 'sung for distinction sake. This might be easily 'brought to pass, if either the court play-writers be 'commanded to read the Scripture, or the city Scrip-'ture readers be commanded to write plays. This, as 'it would much advantage our part, so would it much 'disadvantage the King's; for, as by it we should gain 'a new place of edifying, so Captain Trigg, and the rest 'of the players which are now in service, would doubt-'lessly return to their callings, and much lessen the 'King's army *.'

Another tract, of a character somewhat similar,

* Another proposition is the following, which, though not connected with our subject, may be quoted for its curiosity. It is the first in the list.

'That the time of gaming being now come in, you would be pleased 'to take into your serious consideration, that scandalous pack of cards, 'which hath upon the coats names unfit for regenerate ears—as Her-'cules, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Hector of Troy, and such like; 'and that you would change them into Old-Testament names; as the 'Kings to be David, Josiah, Solomon, Hezekiah; the Queens, Sarah, 'Rachel, Hester, Susannah; and the Knaves, lastly, Balaac, Achito-'phel, Tobit, and Bel,' &c.

bearing date 'January 24, 1643,' and exclusively devoted to the subject of plays and players, may also be here mentioned. It is called 'The Actor's 'Remonstrance, or Complaint, for the silencing of 'their profession, and banishment from their several 'Play-houses,' and among the articles of 'complaint,' is the allowance of bear-baiting and puppet-shows, while regular dramatic performances were forbidden. Here also it is urged, that at the 'private houses' of Blackfriars, the Cockpit, and Salisbury Court, 'all obscene and scurrilous jests' had been expunged from the plays acted before the suppression. Nothing is said regarding the public theatres.

The ordinance of the 2d September, 1642, not having been found effectual for its purpose, another was adopted, and published on the 22d October, 1647, which is thus entitled in a tract, in which it was printed for the information of all whom it might concern: 'An Ordnance of the Lords and Commons, 'assembled in Parliament, for the Lord Mayor of the 'City of London, and the Justices of the Peace, to 'suppress Stage-plays and Interludes, &c.' It runs as follows:—

'*Die Veneris, Octob.* 22, 1647.

'For the better suppression of Stage-plays, Inter-'ludes, and Common Players.

'It is this day ordered, by the Lords and Commons 'in Parliament assembled, that the Lord Mayor, Jus-'tices of the Peace, and Sheriffs of the City of London

'and Westminster, the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey, or any two or more of them, shall and may, and 'are hereby authorised and required to enter into all 'houses, and other places within the city of London, 'and liberties thereof, and other places within their 'respective jurisdictions, where stage plays, interludes, 'or other common plays are or shall be acted or played, 'and all such common Players or Actors, as they 'upon view of them, or any one of them, or upon 'oaths by two credible witnesses (which they are 'hereby authorised to minister), shall be proved before 'them, or any two of them, to have acted or played 'in such Playhouses or places abovesaid: and all 'person and persons so offending to commit to any 'common jail or prison, there to remain until the next 'general Sessions of the Peace, holden within the said 'City of London or Liberties thereof, and places 'aforesaid, or sufficient security entered for his or 'their appearance at the said Sessions, there to be 'punished as Rogues, according to law.

'Jo. Brown, Cleric. Parliamentorum.

'Hen. Elsynge, Cler. Parl. Dom. Com.'*

Even the exercise of this summary power was not found sufficient to put an end to theatrical performances, for which, perhaps, the desire increased in proportion to the difficulty of gratifying it; and on the 22d of January, 1647-8, the House of Commons

* Two ordinances of the Lords and Commons. London, printed by Robert Ibbitson, 1647; and Scobell's Coll. Anno 1647, ch. 97.

received information, that plays were still acted in different parts of London and Middlesex. The following is given in Rushworth *, as the course of proceeding adopted upon the occasion :—

'Saturday Jany. 22, 1647.

'This day the House was informed, that many 'Stage-Plays were acted in the several parts of the 'City, and County of Middlesex, notwithstanding the 'Ordinance of Parliament to the contrary. The 'House hereupon ordered, that an Ordinance should 'be drawn for suppressing all Stage-plays, and taking 'down all their boxes, stages and seats in the several 'houses where the said Plays are usually acted, and 'make it unserviceable for acting any plays in for the 'future; and for making a penalty for such as shall 'disobey the said Ordinance: and this Ordinance to 'be brought in with all convenient speed.

'They further ordered, that the Lord Mayor, and 'Sheriffs, and Justices of the Peace of the City of 'London, and the several Militias of the Cities of 'London and Westminster, and likewise of the Ham-'lets, should take care for the suppressing of all stage-'plays for the time to come.'

By the 31st of January, no such Ordinance had been presented to the Commons, and the Lords, on this occasion, seem to have been anxious to outstrip in zeal the other branch of the legislature, and, as if it did not proceed with sufficient dispatch in a matter of

* Collections, part iv. vol. ii. p. 972.

such urgency, dispatched a message on that day, with a copy of an ordinance they had drawn up, in which they required the Commons to concur. According to Rushworth*, the matter was instantly debated in the Commons, but afterwards postponed; and the committee, to which the House had referred the drawing up of the ordinance 'for suppressing stage-plays and punishing stage-players,' was ordered to report upon an ordinance which it seems it had, in fact, prepared, although not presented. It was reported on the same day, read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on the Thursday following. What occasioned the farther postponement, we have no information, possibly some opposition the measure received; but on Thursday, February 3rd, nothing was done in the matter, and in the interval between January 31st, and Wednesday, February 9th, the ordinance was recommitted: in the proceedings of the Commons on the latter day (as detailed by Rushworth†), we read the following paragraph.

'An Ordinance was this day reported to the House 'of Commons, from the Committee to whom it was 'formerly committed, for the more effectual suppressing 'of Stage-Plays, by committing and fining such as 'shall offend herein for the first offence, and for whipping them for the second offence, as being incorrigible: 'which was read the third time, and assented unto and 'sent to the Lords for their Lordship's concurrence:

* Part iv. vol. ii. p. 980.

† Part iv. vol. ii. p. 991.

'their Lordships concurred accordingly, and for better 'satisfaction the sum of the ordinance is to this effect.'

This is followed by an abridgment of the act, which, two days afterwards, was published, 'for the suppression of stage-plays and interludes.' It made five different provisions on the subject. 1. It declared all players rogues within the meaning of 39 Eliz. and 7 Jac. I. 2. It authorised the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs to pull down and demolish all stage galleries, seats and boxes. 3. It inflicted the punishment of public whipping upon all players, for the first offence, and for the second offence they were to be deemed incorrigible rogues, and dealt with accordingly. 4. It appropriated all money collected from the spectators to the poor of the parish. 5. It imposed a fine of five shillings upon every person present at the performance of a play*.

* The Act is set out at length in *Scobell's Collection of Acts & Ordinances* from 1640 to 1656; and as I am not aware that it has ever been republished in connexion with the history of the stage, it is here subjoined:—

'11th Febr, 1647.

'For the Suppression of all Stage-Plays and Interludes.

'Whereas the Acts of Stage-Plays, Interludes and common Plays 'condemned by ancient Heathens, and much less to be tolerated 'amongst professors of the Christian Religion, is the occasion of many '& sundry great vices & disorders, tending to the high provocation of 'God's wrath & displeasure, which lies heavy upon this kingdom, & 'to the disturbance of the peace thereof; in regard whereof the same 'hath been prohibited by Ordinance of this present Parliament, and 'yet is presumed to be practised by divers in contempt thereof: There-'fore, for the better suppression of the said Stage-Plays, Interludes

Even this extraordinary severity did not completely put an end to theatrical representations; and on the

'and common Players, it is ordered & ordained by the Lords & 'Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by authority of 'the same, that all Stage-players & Players of Interludes and common 'Plays, are hereby declared to be, and are and shall be taken to be 'Rogues, and punishable within the statutes of the thirty-ninth year of 'the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the seventh year of the reign of 'King James, and liable to the pains & penalties therein contained, '& proceeded against according to the said statutes, whether they be 'wanderers or no, and notwithstanding any Licence whatsoever from 'the King, or any person or persons to that purpose.

'And it is further ordered & ordained by the authority aforesaid, 'that the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs of the City of 'London and Westminster, and of the Counties of Middlesex & Surrey, 'or any two or more of them, shall & may and are hereby authorised 'and required, to pull down and demolish, or cause or procure to be 'pulled down and demolished, all Stage Galleries, Seats & Boxes, 'erected or used, or which shall be erected and used, for the acting or 'playing, or seeing acted or played, such Stage-plays, Interludes and 'Plays aforesaid, within the said City of London and Liberties 'thereof, and other places within their respective jurisdictions; and all 'such common Players and Actors of such Plays and Interludes, as 'upon view of them or any one of them, or by oath of two witnesses '(which they are hereby authorised to administer) shall be proved 'before them or any two of them, to have acted or played such Plays 'and Interludes, as aforesaid, at any time hereafter, or within the 'space of two months before the time of the said conviction, by their 'warrant or warrants, under their hands & seals, to cause to be appre-'hended & openly & publicly whipt in some market town within their 'several jurisdictions during the time of the said market, and also to 'cause such offender or offenders to enter into recognizance or recog-'nizances with two sufficient sureties, never to act or play any Plays or 'Interludes any more, and shall return in the said recognizance or 'recognizances into the Sizes or Sessions to be then next holden for 'the said counties and cities respectively; and to commit to the

13th of September, 1648, the House of Commons found it necessary to appoint a Provost Marshal,

'common jail any such person and persons, as aforesaid, who shall 'refuse to be bound & find such sureties as aforesaid, until he or 'they shall so become bound. And in case any such person or 'persons so convicted of the said offence, shall after again offend in 'the same kind, that then the said person or persons so offending 'shall be, and is hereby declared to be, and be taken as an incorrigible 'Rogue, and shall be punished and dealt with as an incorrigible Rogue 'ought to be by the said statutes.

'And it is hereby further ordered and ordained, that all and every 'sum and sums of money gathered, collected, and taken by any 'person or persons of such persons as shall come to see or be spec- 'tators of the said Stage-plays and Interludes, shall be forfeited & 'paid unto the Churchwardens of the Church or Parish where the 'said sums shall be so collected and taken, to be disposed of to the 'use of the poor of the said Parish, and shall from time to time be 'levied by the said Churchwardens and Constables of the said Parish, 'by warrant under the hands & seals of any two of the Justices of the 'Peace of the County, City or Town Corporate where the said sums 'are so taken and collected, upon complaint thereof to them made, on 'the goods and chattels of the person or persons collecting the same, 'or of the person & persons to whom the same shall be paid by them 'that collect the same, by distress and sale of their goods and chattels, 'rendering to them the overplus, upon examination of the said persons, 'or proof made upon oath before the said Justices of the sum or sums 'so collected & received, which the said Justices are hereby authorized 'to take and examine.

'And it is hereby further ordered & ordained, that every person or 'persons which shall be present and a spectator of any such Stage- 'play or Interlude hereby prohibited, shall for every time he shall be so 'present, forfeit and pay the sum of five shillings to the use of the 'poor of the Parish, where the said person or persons shall at that 'time dwell or sojourn, being convicted thereof by his own confession, 'or proof of any one witness upon oath, before any one Justice of

whose duty it was, among other matters, to seize all ballad-singers, and to suppress stage-plays. The fact is thus recorded by Whitelocke:—

'13 Sept. 1648. Captain Bethan made Provost 'Martial, with power to apprehend such as stayed in 'town contrary to the ordinance, and to seize upon all 'ballad-singers, sellers of malignant pamphlets, and to 'send them to the several Militias, and to suppress 'stage-plays*.'

We may conclude, therefore, that the vigilance and activity of the Lord Mayor, Justices, and Sheriffs, had not been sufficient to accomplish the object. Yet

'Peace of the County, City or Town Corporate where the said offence 'is committed (who is hereby authorized to take the same oath), to be 'levied by the churchwardens or constables of the said Parish, by 'warrant of the said Justice of Peace, by distress and sale of the goods 'of the said person offending, rendering to him the overplus.

'And it is hereby further ordered and ordained, that all Mayors, 'Bailiffs, Constables and other Officers, Soldiers & other persons 'being thereunto required, shall be from time to time, and at all times 'hereafter, aiding and assisting unto the said Lord Mayor, Justices of 'the Peace & Sheriffs in the due execution of this Ordinance, upon 'pain to be fined for their contempt in their neglect or refusal thereof.'

* Malone is in error in most of his figures when he is speaking of the closing of the theatres at this period. He tells us (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 92) that the ordinance (meaning the act) was passed on the 13th of February, 1647-8. It was passed on the 9th of February, and promulgated, according to the date in Scobell, on the 11th of February. He gives the date of the appointment of Captain Bethan, 13th of December, 1648, when he was made Provost Marshal three months earlier; and he cites, as his authority, Whitelocke's *Memorials*, p. 332, when the proper reference is p. 337.

even the Provost Marshal could not prevent clandestine performances; and under date of the 20th of December, 1649, Whitelocke registers, that 'some 'stage-players in St. John's-street were apprehended 'by troopers; their clothes taken away, and them-'selves carried to prison*.' The Red Bull theatre was in St. John's-street, and the performance may have taken place there; but as it was a public and well-known playhouse, such a proceeding would indicate a degree of boldness in the commission of the offence, hardly consistent with the severity of the laws enacted so recently against it.

The latest infraction of the act of suppression, of which we have any intelligence, occurred at Witney, in Oxfordshire, when *Mucedorus* (in the original composition of which Shakespeare is absurdly said to have had some concern) was acted by strolling players. They had previously represented it at Moore, Stanlake, Southleigh, Cumner, and other places, so that the law was not very rigidly enforced in that part of the kingdom; and the representation at Witney, on the 3rd of February, 1653-4, was not interrupted either by the civil or military authorities, but by an accident by which some lives were lost and many persons wounded. John Rowe, of C. C. C. in Oxford, Lecturer to the town of Witney, published an account of the catastrophe in a pamphlet of which the following is the title:—'*Tragi-Comœdia*. Being a brieff

* Memorials, p. 435. Edit. 1732.

'relation of the strange and wonderful hand of God, 'discovered at Witney in the Comedy acted February 'the third, where there were some slaine, many hurt, 'and several other remarkable passages,' &c.*

The performance of Davenant's 'opera,' as he himself calls it †, of *The Siege of Rhodes*, in 1656, is to be looked upon as the first step towards the revival of dramatic performances, and more properly belongs to the transactions of the reign of Charles II., to which I do not at present extend these Annals.

* This tract was printed at Oxford 'by L. Litchfield for Henry Cripps, 1653-4.'

† And as it is called in the following lines by Thomas Pecke, in his *Parnassi Puerperium*, 1659, addressed 'to the egregious poet, Sir Will. Davenant.'

'That Ben, whose head deserved the Roscian bayes,
'Was the first gave the name of works to plays;
'You, his corrival, in this waspish age
'Are more than Atlas to the fainting stage.
'Your *Bonus Genius* you this way display,
'And to delight us in your *Opera*.'

The sense seems incomplete; but the author does not show, in any part of his work, that he had much of that commodity to spare: to read *do* for *to* in the last line would improve it.

THE HISTORY

OF

DRAMATIC POETRY.

MIRACLE-PLAYS.

INTRODUCTION

TO

MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE dramatic productions of this country exist in no more ancient form than that of plays founded upon the Old and New Testaments, with additions from the apocryphal gospels. The legends of the lives of saints and martyrs appear also to have afforded subjects for exhibitions of the same kind*. Their proper designation is Miracles, or Plays of Miracles†.

* The history of St. George of Cappadocia seems very frequently to have been employed for this purpose. An ancient Chronicler of the events of the reign of Henry V. (see Ann. of the Stage, vol. i. p. 20) gives an account of a representation of St. George before that King and the Emperor Sigismund at Windsor, in 1416. The description, however, is not very intelligible. The play of St. George was performed in 1511 at Basingbourne, in Cambridgeshire, and the particulars of charge, &c., are given by Warton, *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iv. 151, edit. 8vo.

† Warton, Percy, Hawkins, Malone and others have concurred in calling them 'Mysteries,' a term at a very early date adopted in France, but in any similar sense, I apprehend, (until comparatively a recent period) unknown in England. Dodsley, in the preface to the Collection of Old Plays he published in 1744, seems to have been the first to use the word 'Mystery' to denote one of our most ancient dramatic representations. The Latin word commonly employed for this purpose in the infancy of our stage was *ludus*:—thus Fitzstephen mentions the *ludos sanctiores* of London, and Matthew Paris, the *ludum de Sancta*

In their earliest state these pieces were of the simplest construction, merely following the incidents of Scripture or of the *Pseudo-evangelium*, the dialogue being maintained by the characters there introduced.

Katherina at Dunstaple, adding the further explanation that such pieces were vulgarly called *Miracula*. Robert Grossetete, writing his *Manuel de Peché*, about the same date, terms them in French *Miracles;* and Robert de Brunne, translating that poem, employs the same word. The author of *Piers Ploughman's Crede* also calls them 'Miracles,' and Chaucer denominates them 'Plays of Miracles.' In the Household Book of Henry VII., they are once entered as 'Marvels,' but 'marvel' and 'miracle' may be considered synonymous. 'Plays,' as a generic term, was also very early in use; and, that they might not be confounded with games, they were subsequently distinguished as 'stage-plays.' The word 'interludes' became the most frequent appellation for them in the reign of Henry VII.; but, perhaps, strictly speaking, it had reference to a particular species of dramatic entertainment. The title of a tract, by John Bale, would appear, to those who have not seen it, to contradict this position: it is called *The Mysterye of Inyquyte*, Iniquity being the name of a personage who figured very prominently in some of our older dramatic representations, called 'Morals,' though not in 'Miracles.' Bale's tract is, however, merely a prose answer to a Roman Catholic poem, *The Genealogy of Ponce Pantolabus*, attacking *seriatim* all the principal reformers. Bale's answer was printed at Geneva, in 1545, by Michael Woode. With regard to the employment of the word *Mistère* by the French, Roquefort, in his *Glossaire de la Langue Romane* (8vo. Paris, 1808), informs us, that *Miracles* were *par suite* called *Mistères*, and that both meant *pièces de notre ancien théâtre;* but, under the word *Mistère*, he says nothing of its application. It was not only well understood in France to mean a dramatic performance, but in time it was used synonymously with *Comédie;* and according to *Gouget* (Bibl. Franç. xi., 212), in the reign of Louis XII., Gringoire obtained the title of *Compositeur, Historien, et Facteur de Mistères ou Comédies.* The compound term of *Miracle-play* seemed to me best adapted, according to the old authorities, to express briefly the origin and nature of the representation.

By degrees, however, more invention was displayed, particularly with reference to the persons concerned in the conduct of the story.

Although Miracles or Plays of Miracles are the source and foundation of our national drama, they have hitherto been passed over with little notice; and owing to want of that knowledge, which can only be obtained by due examination, extraordinary mistakes have been committed regarding them. Among these errors may, perhaps, be included the supposition, that as England possesses an earlier record of the performance of a Miracle-play, than has yet been produced by any foreign country, they were here indigenous. Some of the ensuing remarks may warrant an inference, that if we did not derive them from France, they were originally written in the language of that country.

Two conjectures have been hazarded respecting the origin of these performances in Europe: the one is that of Voltaire, (in his *Essais sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations,*) that Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth century, wrote his play of *Christ's Passion,* and others of the same kind, at Constantinople, *pour les opposer aux ouvrages dramatiques des anciens Grecs et des anciens Romains**: the other conjecture also,

* Stephen Gosson, one of the most zealous enemies of theatrical representations in the middle of the reign of Elizabeth, assigned a reason for the invention by Nazianzen sufficiently absurd. The advocates of the stage had adduced 'Christ's Passion,' by Nazianzen, to shew that he and other fathers approved dramatic performances; to which Gosson replies, that Nazianzen wrote his piece to reform the then existing and established Popish plays, on the feast of *Corpus Christi,*

according to Warton, is that of a French writer, who contends that the monks of the middle ages employed this species of dramatic amusement, to supersede the dancing, music, mimicry, and profane mummeries at the ancient fairs *. Both these positions may be well founded, as they are certainly not inconsistent with each other: Gregory Nazianzen may have been the inventor of these religious plays, and ecclesiastics may have used them at a later period to reform the people, and to introduce among them a convenient knowledge of the Scriptures †. If Miracle-plays had their origin

which was not made a festival until eight or nine centuries afterwards: 'For Nazianzen (says he), detesting the corruption of the *Corpus Christi* 'plays, that were set out by the papists, and inveighing against them, 'thought it better to write the Passion of Christ in numbers himself, 'that all such as delight in numerosity of speech might read it,—not 'behold it on the stage, where some base fellow, that played Christ, 'would bring the person of Christ into contempt.'—*Plays confuted in five Actions.* No date, but printed in 1581 or 1582. Sign. E. 5. b.

* Hist. Engl. Poet. iii. 195, edit. 8vo. Warton does not name his author, but calls him merely 'a judicious French writer now living,' having just before mentioned *La Fête de Foux.* It is possible that he meant Du Tilliot, who, in 1741, published at Lausanne a small and learned work in 4to. on *La Fête de Foux*, and who might be living when Warton published the 2nd 4to. volume of his Hist. Engl. Poet. in 1778. Du Tilliot's words are merely these: 'Lorsque les Payens 'embrassèrent le Christianisme, ils eurent peine à perdre l'habitude où 'ils étoient de célébrer certaines fêtes rejouissantes: ils substituèrent 'de nouvelles aux anciennes, d'abord avec moins de licence, ce qui 'engagea peut-être les Eveques à les tolérer quelque tems, quoique l'on 'puisse dire qu'ils n'épargnèrent rien pour les abolir dans la suite.'

† Warton (Hist. E. P. iii. 195, edit. 8vo.) referring to both these conjectures, inclines to Voltaire, apparently without perceiving that they might be reconciled.

in Constantinople, they would soon find their way into Italy, and from thence they may have been dispersed over the rest of Europe.

The history of the French stage has not been carried higher than the thirteenth century; *au treizieme siècle nous avons déjà de drames*, are the words of Le Grand *: in this country we have seen, on the authority of Matthew Paris, that the Miracle-play of Saint Katherine was acted at Dunstaple very early in the twelfth century †. Although the French have no records of so remote a date, it is admitted that the piece just named was got up by a Norman monk, who was also a member of the University of Paris ‡.

It has been established by Mr. Markland, with as much clearness as after the lapse of so many centuries could be expected, that the Miracle-plays annually performed at Chester, with some interruptions, until 1577 §, were originally produced in 1268, during the

* Fabliaux ou Contes du XII. et du XIII. Siècle. Tom. ii. p. 122. Edit. 1781.

† Vide Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 3.

‡ The French had a *Mistère de Sainte Catherine*, which, according to the MS. *Histoire de Metz Véritable*, as cited in a work attributed to Les Frères Parfait (Hist. du Théât. Franç. ii. 351.) was performed in 1434.

§ At least one of the series of Miracle-plays, annually exhibited at Chester, was performed in 1577: this fact appears from Harl. MS. 1944, which is a copy, with some additions and variations, of the work of Archdeacon Rogers upon Chester: the following extracts refer to about the period of which we are speaking.

'A. D. 1571. In this yeare the Whitson playes weare played in 'Chester.

mayoralty of John Arnway *. The authorship has been assigned to Ralph Higden, the compiler of the *Polycronicon;* but if they were first acted in 1268, he could have had no connexion with them then: he died, according to some authorities, in 1363, and according to others, in 1377, and, in either case, was not born when they were originally represented.

'A. D. 1574. The Whitson playes weare played in this Cittie this 'yere.

'A. D. 1577. The Earle of Darbie did lye 2 nightes at his [the 'Mayor's] howse: the Shepheardes play was played at the highe 'crosse, with other triumphes.'

Had the performances not been interrupted in the intervals, Rogers would hardly have thought it necessary to specify, that the plays were performed in those particular years 1571, 1574 and 1577.

By Harl. MS. 2105, consisting of Short Annals of Chester, from 1348 to 1580, it seems evident, that at an earlier date a temporary stop had been put to the exhibition of the Miracle-plays: under the year 1545 is the following entry: 'William Holcroft, Mayor. In 'this yere M. Holcroft died, and M. John Walley was chosyn mayor, 'and *the plaies went* that same yeare.' Probably during the controversies of the Reformation, the performance of Popish Miracle-plays, as they were called, was forbidden, and in 1545, they were, for the first time, allowed to be revived. In 1529, a different species of dramatic entertainment had been substituted, by the performance of a play founded upon the romance of *Robert of Cicily.* See Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 113.

* In his learned and comprehensive 'Dissertation,' prefixed to two of the plays (one founded upon the Old and the other upon the New Testament), which he printed for the use of the Roxburghe Club, and which, with some additional notes by him, has since been incorporated in Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, vol. iii. It is to be regretted that this Essay, displaying much general as well as particular information on the subject, is not there followed by the ancient religious dramas it was written to illustrate.

It is not, perhaps, to be disputed that Higden was in some way, and at some period, concerned in the performance of the Chester Whitsun plays: the question is, in what way and at what period?

There are two MS. copies of these productions in the British Museum, and in a note to one of them (MS. Harl. No. 2124) it is said (and in our present view the expression is important) that Higden 'was 'thrice at Rome before he could obtaine leave of the 'Pope to have them in the English tongue.' Warton thought the inference was, that prior to the date when Higden obtained this 'leave,' performances of the kind were in Latin, and it never seems to have struck him as possible that they should have been in French*. If before that permission the Chester Whitsun plays were in French, and if in consequence of it Higden translated, or 'made' them into English, and so had them represented about the year 1338, it will reconcile dates, and remove much of the difficulty that has hitherto surrounded the subject. The Mayoralty of Arnway in 1268, and the instrumentality of Higden in 1338, 'to have' the plays 'in the English tongue,' have been sometimes confounded.

As the conjecture, that the Miracle-plays at Chester were first performed in French, has not before been started, it will be necessary to advert with a little particularity to the grounds on which it rests.

The law requiring that 'all pleas in the Courts of

* Hist. Engl. Poet., iii. 16, edit. 8vo., note *d*.

'the King, or of any other lord, shall be pleaded and 'judged in the English tongue,' was passed in the 36th of Edward III.; and it is the opinion of Tyrwhitt, stated in his introduction to the 'Canterbury Tales,' that at the commencement of that monarch's reign, 'the French and English languages subsisted 'together throughout the kingdom, the higher orders, 'both clergy and laity, speaking almost universally 'French, the lower retaining the use of their native 'tongue, but also frequently adding to it a knowledge 'of the other.' Edward III., then, was the first King since the Conquest, who by law discountenanced the farther propagation of the French language in this country; and it will not fail to strike the reader that Higden's endeavour (according to my conjecture) to procure the representation of the Chester Miracle-plays in English*, was accomplished in 1338, when Edward III. had been eleven years on the throne.

After what Tyrwhitt has advanced upon the

* It is a circumstance deserving attention, that Higden himself, in his *Polycronicon*, b. i. c. lix., laments the manner in which the English language had been impaired, and thus accounts for it:—

'This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges: 'oon is for children in scole, azens the usage and maner of alle other 'nacions, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to con-'strewe her lessouns, and her thingis a Fransche, and haveth siththe 'that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes 'children beth ytauzt for to speke Frenshe from the tyme that thei 'beth rokked in her cradel, and cunneth speke, and playe with a childes 'brooche. And uplondish men wole likne hem self to gentil men, and 'fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche for to be the more 'ytold of.'

point*, it is not necessary to enter into a discussion of the manner in which, subsequent to the Conquest, the Norman kings and nobility endeavoured to bring the French language into common use among all classes in this country. Prelates from Normandy were placed in all the richest sees of the kingdom, and they in turn chose the abbots from their countrymen, while (as Tyrwhitt has remarked) the abbots were 'not 'less industrious to stock their convents with foreign-'ers whom they invited from the continent.' It is a striking circumstance, already noticed, that the author of the oldest Miracle-play of which we have any trace in our history, was a Norman monk, who had been so invited by the Abbot of St. Alban's, in the commencement of the twelfth century. How importantly the object of the court, nobility, and clergy in this respect, would be aided by the representation among the people of dramatic performances in French, is self-evident.

The Chester Miracle-plays themselves contain some internal evidence which has hitherto escaped notice. Small portions have been handed down to us in French: some sentences of the speech of Augustus Cæsar in the sixth play, and part of the dialogue between the three Kings in the eighth play, are still preserved in that language in the MSS.; and there could have been no possible reason for converting them into French, if they had been originally composed in English or in Latin. They are probably

* Vide his Essay on Chaucer part i.

relics of the most ancient structure, retained in the current transcripts, although Higden might not think them necessary for the performance, and therefore did not include them in his version*.

But this point does not depend upon inference only: some positive testimony may be brought forward, establishing the connexion between the Miracle-plays of this country, and the *Mistères* of France.

In *Le Mistère du viel Testament par personnages, joué à Paris*, printed by Antoine Verard about 1490, but acted at a much earlier date, and in that part of it which treats of *La creacion d'Adam et d'Eve*, the following passage is put into the mouth of the first man.

'Hoc nunc os de ossibus meis,
'Et caro de carne mea.
'Ses os sont de mes os formez,
'Et sa chair de ma chair venue:

* To Mr. Sharp's accurate, circumstantial, and curious Dissertation on the plays of the same kind, performed by the Trading Companies of Coventry, at the feast of *Corpus Christi*, is added the piece represented by the Tailors and Sheermen, as late as the year 1534; and it contains a speech by a *Nuntius*, which is in French, and possibly for the same reason. The word *nouvelles* also occurs in it, instead of 'tidings,' by which it was usually rendered. Excepting upon this supposition, how can we account for the conclusion of Herod's speech in the 15th of the plays in the Townley MS.? 'I can no more *French*:' the translator found it in the original, and rendered it literally into English; and it would not be unnatural for this 'Paynim,' who was made to speak French for the purpose of the play, to stop short on such an account, especially as it gave the author an opportunity, which he seems to have wanted, of bringing the piece to a short conclusion. This point is further considered in a note upon the passage itself in the course of the ensuing examination of Miracle-plays.

'Car tout d'un sang sont conformez,
'Selon quelle est de moy cogneue.
'Dont pourtant quelle est d'homme yssue
'Sera appellee virago,
'Pource que je lay apperceue,
'Quia sumpta est de viro.'

In the second of the Chester series of plays, on the same occasion, namely, after the Deity has taken Eve out of the side of Adam, the latter observes:—

'I see well, Lorde, through thy grace,
'Bone of my bone thou has her mase *,
'And fleshe of my fleshe she hase,
'And my shape through thy sawe †.
'Wherefore she shalbe called, I wysse,
'*Virago*, nothing amisse,
'For out of man taken she is,
'And to man she shall drawe.'

It must be admitted, that this passage looks more like a direct translation, than it perhaps really was; for in the Latin version of the Bible by St. Jerome, formerly held in such high veneration, the part of the second chapter of Genesis, which relates to the creation of Eve, is thus given—*Hoc nunc os de ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea: hæc vocabitur virago, quoniam de viro sumpta est.* At the same time there are points of resemblance between the French and the English, which are not to be found in the Latin‡. Another

* *Mase*] Made.

† *Sawe*] Saying or Speech.

‡ For the reference to St. Jerome's Bible, I am indebted to Mr. Douce, who, from a valuable MS. in his possession, also pointed out

instance, apparently of translation, is to be found in the same play. In the French, before Cain kills Abel, he says:—

'Si feray je le coup, et la follye,
'Dieu ne scauroit de ce fait m'arrester,
'Ne le paillart dentre mes mains oster:'

which is thus rendered in the Chester play:—

'Though God stoode here in this place,
'For to help thee in this case,
'Thou should dye before his face.'

This is hardly so literal as the following from the fourth play. In the French, Abraham being in the act of sacrificing his son, Isaac exclaims,

'Mais vueillez moy les yeulx cachier,
'Affin que le glaive ne voye;
'Quant de moy vendres approchier,
'Peult être que je fouyroye.'

Higden (on the supposition that he was the translator) rendered the lines as follows:—

'Also, father, I pray you, hyde my eyen,
'That I see not your sworde so keene;
'Your stroke, father, I would not see,
'Least I against it grill*.'

The fifth play of the Chester collection affords still

the manner in which Wickliffe translated the passage:—'Now bone of 'my bonys and fleshe of my fleshe, this shall be clepyd manny's dede, 'for she is taken of a man.'

* Grill is used by Chaucer as an adjective, and it means, *horrible* or *grim*; but here it is employed as a verb, and with great poetical force: the meaning of the line therefore is—'lest I shrink from it with horror.'

further evidence to the same point: it relates to King Balak, and Balaam the prophet. In the French *Mistère*, the Ass, sorely beaten, thus addresses his rider:—

'Balaam, suis je pas ta beste,
'Sur qui tu a tousjours este,
'Tant en yver comme en este?
'Te feiz jamais tell chose?'

In the Chester play the passage occupies one line more:—

'Ame not I, master, thyne owne asse,
'To beare thee whether thou wilte passe,
'And many winters ready was?
'To smyte me it is shame .....
'Ney, never yet so served I thee.'

If it be here said, that the Bible was employed by both authors, and that the words of Scripture are by both closely followed, it may be answered, that the word 'winter,' which is found in the French and English, is not in Numbers xxii. 30; and that this circumstance establishes, that one was probably a translation from the other, unless some common original can be brought forward, containing the same peculiar expression. If any such common original were discovered, it would militate against the positions, that England was in the first instance indebted to France for Miracle-plays, or that they were written in this country in the French language. The preceding remarks apply to the performances at Chester, as I have not been able to trace the same resemblances in

other similar collections, and in the Chester plays they are only found in those which relate to the history of the Old Testament.

The authors of these sacred dramas, having the advantage of a story already constructed, had only to clothe the incidents in dialogue, while the ordinary objection of want of probability could never be urged against them, even in those portions which were derived from the apocryphal gospels. The term 'Miracle' implies the divine agency, and a conviction among the auditors of the power of that agency was all that was necessary. The words of the author of *Piers Ploughman's Vision*, referring to the season of the year when representations of this kind ordinarily took place, may very fitly be applied to them:—

——————'Our bileve sufficeth,
'As clarkes in *Corpus Christi* singen and reden,
'That *sola fides sufficit.*'

In judging of the form, incidents, and language of these productions, we must of course carry our minds back to the period when they were written or represented: we shall then find, that much that now seems absurd, ludicrous, or profane, was then pious, awful, and impressive.

The most ancient extant specimen of a Miracle-play in English is to be found among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum*. It formed no doubt one of a series, but the rest have not been handed down to

* No. 2253.

us, and it is certainly as old as the earlier part of the reign of Edward III. It is founded upon the 16th chapter of the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, and relates to the descent of Christ to hell, to liberate from thence Adam, Eve, John the Baptist, and the Prophets. It differs from other pieces of the same kind, and upon the same subject, in having an introduction and conclusion, in the way of prologue and epilogue; but in other respects it is conducted much after the usual manner, as will be hereafter more particularly explained. Besides this, and a few other single pieces, there exist in this country three sets of Miracles or Miracle-plays, which go through the principal incidents of the Old and New Testaments*.

1. The Towneley collection, supposed to have belonged to Widkirk Abbey, before the suppression of the monasteries, the MS. of which appears to have been written about the reign of Henry VI. †

* Among the Digby MSS. (No. 133) in the Bodleian, is a set of three Miracle-plays, never yet noticed, founded on that part of the Acts of the Apostles which relates to the conversion of St. Paul. In the same volume is bound up a long religious play, from which Warton (H. E. P. iii. 187) quoted only a stage direction: it is called *Oreginale de Sca Maria Magdalena*. A very curious copy of an early Moral is in the same collection, and I have mentioned it under the proper head. An account of, and quotations from the Miracle-plays of the conversion of St. Paul, and of the Life of Mary Magdalen, are subjoined to my review of the Miracle-plays of Widkirk, Chester, and Coventry.

† The following are the subjects of the plays in this collection, being thirty in number. I. The Creation and the Rebellion of Lucifer. II. Mactatio Abel. III. Processus Noæ cum filiis. IV. Abraham. V. Jacob and Esau. VI. Processus Prophetarum. VII. Pharao.

2. A volume called the *Ludus Coventriæ*, consisting of Miracle-plays said to have been represented at Coventry on the feast of *Corpus Christi*, the MS. of which was written at least as early as the reign of Henry VII. *

3. The Chester Whitsun plays, of which two MSS.

VIII. Cæsar Augustus. IX. Annunciatio. X. Salutatio Elizabethæ. XI. Pastorum. XII. Alia eorundem. XIII. Oblatio Magorum. XIV. Fugatio Josephi et Mariæ in Egiptum. XV. Magnus Herodes. XVI. Purificatio Mariæ. XVII. Johannes Baptista. XVIII. Conspiratio Christi. XIX. Colaphizatio. XX. Flagellatio. XXI. Processus Crucis. XXII. Processus Talentorum. XXIII. Extractio Animarum. XXIV. Resurrectio Domini. XXV. Peregrini. XXVI. Thomas Indiæ. XXVII. Ascensio Domini, &c. XXVIII. Judicium. XXIX. Lazarus. XXX. Suspensio Judæ.

* It consists of forty-two Plays, including one which now seems wanting in the collection: their subjects are these. I. The Creation. II. The Fall of Man. III. The Death of Abel. IV. Noah's Flood. V. Abraham's Sacrifice. VI. Moses and the Ten Tables. VII. The Genealogy of Christ. VIII. Anna's Pregnancy. IX. Mary in the Temple. X. Mary's betrothment. XI. The Salutation and Conception. XII. Joseph's return. XIII. The Visit to Elizabeth. XIV. The Trial of Joseph and Mary. XV. The Birth of Christ. XVI. The Shepherds' Offering. XVII. Caret in MS. XVIII. Adoration of the Magi. XIX. The Purification. XX. Slaughter of the Innocents. XXI. Christ disputing in the Temple. XXII. The Baptism of Christ. XXIII. The Temptation. XXIV. The Woman taken in Adultery. XXV. Lazarus. XXVI. Council of the Jews. XXVII. Mary Magdalen. XXVIII. Christ betrayed. XXIX. Herod. XXX. The Trial of Christ. XXXI. Pilate's Wife's dream. XXXII. The Crucifixion. XXXIII. Christ's Descent into Hell. XXXIV. Sealing of the Tomb. XXXV. The Resurrection. XXXVI. The Three Maries. XXXVII. Christ appearing to Mary Magdalen. XXXVIII. The Pilgrim of Emaus. XXXIX. The Ascension. XL. Descent of the Holy Ghost. XLI. The Assumption of the Virgin. XLII. Doomsday.

are in the British Museum, the earliest dated in the year 1600, and the other in 1607 *.

Performances of the same description (as has been stated in the Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 11) took place in many parts of the kingdom. Holinshed, speaking of the third year of the reign of Edward VI. †, mentions the plays 'accustomed yearly to be kept' at Wymondham, near Norwich; and specimens of the pieces exhibited at York and Newcastle, are extant in Drake's and Brand's Histories of those places ‡. At Manningtree, with the advance of the drama, Morals (the precise nature of which will be hereafter detailed) seem to have been substituted for Miracle-plays §; but at Tewkesbury, the most

* A MS. of them, dated 1604, is also in the Bodleian Library. The number of the plays is four and twenty, *viz.*—I. The Fall of Lucifer. II. De creatione Mundi. III. De Diluvio Noæ. IV. De Abrahamo, Melchisedech et Loth. V. De Mose et Rege Balaak, et Balaam Propheta. VI. De Salutatione et Nativitate Salvatoris. VII. De Pastoribus greges pascentibus. VIII. De tribus Regibus Orientalibus. IX. De oblatione tertium Regum. X. De occisione Innocentum. XI. De purificatione Virginis. XII. De Tentatione Salvatoris. XIII. De Chelidomo et de Resurrectione Lazari. XIV. De Jesu intrante domum Simeonis leprosi. XV. De Cœna Domini. XVI. De Passione Christi. XVII. De Descensu Christi ad Inferos. XVIII. De Resurrectione Jesu Christi. XIX. De Christo ad Castellam Emaus. XX. De Ascensione Domini. XXI. De Electione Mathiæ, &c. XXII. Ezekiel. XXIII. De Adventu Antichristi. XXIV. De Judicio extremo.

† Chron. fol. 1028, edit. 1587.

‡ See also Croft's *Excerpta Antiqua*, York, 1797, p. 105.

§ Dekker, in his *Seven Deadly Sins of London*, 1606, mentions 'the old Morals of Manningtree.' See also note to Henry IV., part i., act ii., scene 4.

ancient species of theatrical representation appears to have been preserved until the year 1585*. We find in one authority, applicable to Bristol (Cott. MS. *Jul.* B xii.) that a Miracle-play was sometimes acted merely in dumb show, for when Henry VII. visited that city, in his progress after his coronation, 'the Shipwright's play,' relating probably to Noah's Flood, was performed before him 'without speech.'

The Cornish 'Guary Miracle,' mentioned with some particularity by Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall*, 1602, was a dramatic performance of precisely the same character as the English Miracle-play, the chief, if not the only difference being, that the former was in the ancient language of that part of the kingdom, a mixture of Celtic and Saxon. There is every probability, that the Guary Miracle was merely a translation. Several specimens of these productions are extant, and one of them, said to have been originally written by a person of the name of Jordan, and subsequently rendered from the Cornish into English, is in the British Museum †.

* In the accounts of the Churchwardens of Tewkesbury, under date of 1578, we read as follows:—'Payd for the players geers, six sheep-skins for Christ's garments:' and in an inventory contained in the same book occur these words, with the date of 1585.—'Eight heads of hair for the Apostles, and ten beards, and a face or vizier for the Devil.'

† Harl. MS. 1867. The late president of the Royal Society, D. Gilbert, Esq., M.P., has rendered this piece very accessible by an extremely accurate impression of it, with a copy of which he was kind enough to favour me. It is made from a different MS. to that in the Museum, but there is no substantial variation. Mr. D. Gilbert has also published from a MS. an ancient poem in the Cornish language,

Miracle-plays were written, and even to a comparatively late period acted, by ecclesiastics. Robert Grossetete, Bishop of Lincoln, (whose authority for a different purpose is cited in the Annals of the Stage, vol. i., p. 6,) in his *Manuel de Peché*, under the head *De Miracles*, states that they were *cuntrové* by *les fols clercs;* that the clergy performed in them in disguises; and that the representations sometimes took place in churches and cemeteries, as well as in the public streets. It is recorded of Lydgate, monk of Bury, that he was the author of 'a procession of pageants from the creation *;' and Skelton, who had been tutor, and was subsequently chap-

called 'Mount Calvary,' which, he states in the preface to the Guary Miracle, is of a more ancient idiom than the drama. The translation of both into English was by a person of the name of John Keigwin, who died in 1710. Of Jordan, the editor says [Preface vii.] he could discover nothing, beyond the fact that he lived at Helston. It is to be observed, that several passages of the Cornish play are still preserved in English, as if Jordan had left them untranslated.

* Vide Ritson's Bibl. Poet., p. 79. The 'Processioun of Corpus Christi,' there also attributed to Lydgate, has nothing dramatic in its shape and conduct: it consists of an enumeration and description of Patriarchs and Saints, beginning with Adam, Melchisedech, Abraham, &c. down to Ambrosius and Thomas Aquinas. The title was given by Shirley, the transcriber of the volume, who by a note at the end seems to have thought the poem incomplete: 'Shirley kowde fynde no more for this copye.' However, to me the piece appears finished, the design having been this: before the administration of the eucharist, in some way to represent the figures of the persons successively named, in order to produce a greater degree of piety, and to make a show at the feast of *Corpus Christi:* when the figures have been exhibited one after the other, the author thus concludes:—

lain to Henry VIII., mentions in his *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*, printed in 1523, that one of his earlier works had been a series of performances of the same kind, 'played in Joyous Garde,' or Arthur's Castle.

The most authentic and indisputable testimony of the instrumentality of the clergy in the performance of dramatic representations is furnished by a valuable MS. formerly in the collection of Mr. Craven Ord*: it is a thick folio volume, consisting of minute entries of all the expenses incurred by the Priory of Thetford from Christmas, 1461, to Christmas, 1540, after which date the house was dissolved. It contains several hundred entries of payments to players and minstrels, and, in not a few instances, it is expressly added, that the plays were represented with the assistance of the members of the convent. The accounts are not regular until the reign of Henry VII., and it is to be remarked, that the items of expense for dramatic exhibitions when the convent lent its aid for the purpose, do not begin prior to the

'With there figures, shewed in yowre presence
'By dyvers likenesse you to do pleasaunce,
'Receyvith hem with devout reverence
'This brede of lyf ye kepe in remembraunce;
'Ofte of this Egipt of worldly grevaunce
'Yowre restoratyf celestial manna:
'Of whiche god graunt eternal suffisaunce,
'Where Aungels syng everlastyng Osanna.'

It is followed in the same MS. (Harl. MS. No. 2251) by a series of historical portraits, exhibited probably in the same manner, beginning with Edward of Carnarvon.

* And now in that of the Duke of Newcastle.

11th Henry VIII. Anterior to this year, the entries usually run in more general terms: 13 Henry VII., 'To menstrell and pleyers in festo Epiphīe, 2*s.*:—' 19 Henry VII. 'To the pley of Myldenale, 12*d.*:—' 21 Henry VII., 'In regard lusoribus et minstrells, 17*d.*:—' 2 Henry VIII., 'To the pley in sent Cuthbert parissh, 2*s.*' After 10 Henry VIII., entries in the following forms are frequent:—11 Henry VIII., 'Lusoribus cum adjutorio Conventus, 2*s.*:'—12 Henry VIII., 'Jocatoribus cum adjutorio Conventus, 2*s.*:'—14 Henry VIII., 'Jocatoribus in Nat: Dom: cum auxilio Conventus 20*d.*' These representations, with the assistance of the ecclesiastics, usually occurred twice or three times in every year, but in the 22 Henry VIII., there were five repetitions of them. After this date (and the fact may be accounted for by the progress of the Reformation) only three entries are met with of plays performed by the convent in conjunction with common actors; and after the 24 Henry VIII., although rewards to the players of the King and of the nobility are often registered, not one occurs which shews that the members of the Priory of Thetford joined in the representation.

The British Museum contains the 'Register of the Fraternity or Gild of *Corpus Christi*,' at York, from 1408 to 1546, and under the earliest date we find an enumeration of the various properties belonging to that religious society, from which it is evident that then, and doubtless for some years afterwards, it was engaged in the representation of the Miracle-

plays in that city. Among the articles are more than one book of the plays, a number of banners and flags of all descriptions, vizards, beards, diadems, crowns, &c., besides the castles or scaffolds, on which probably the representations took place *.

It seems, that great disorders had taken place in York during the representation of the *Corpus Christi* plays previous to 1426, and they had in consequence been discontinued at intervals. In that year, however, a friar minor of the name of William Melton, who is called 'a professor of holy pageantry,' preached several sermons in favour of them; and with a provision that

* The following are extracts from this very curious document, in which the items and their value are specified with the utmost particularity :—

		s.	d.
	Alius liber de Ludo	100	0
	Alius liber de eodem, Anglice vocatus crede-play, continens 22 quarternos.		
xvii.	Vexilla magna	80	0
iv.	Vexilla minora de serico rubeo	6	8
ix.	Alia Vexilla vocata 'pennons' de novo factis, cum scutis fidei et calicibus depictis	11	6
xxiv.	Instrumenta ferrea, vocata sokkets, ordinata pro extensione vexillorum	4	6
	Una Corona regis cum ceptro, et una cithera	0	6
iv.	Alia Vexilla vocata 'pennons'	3	4
x.	Diadęmata pro Christo et Apostolis cum una larva, et aliis novem 'cheverons'	0	6
xiv.	Torchiæ.		
iii.	Judasses veteras	1	2
xii.	Castella picta cum calicibus aureis, et laminis de ferro ejusdem castellis pertinentibus	4	0
xxxiv.	Vexilla picta per torcheis ordinatis	20	0

the revellings, drunkenness, &c., with which they had been previously attended, should be reformed, they were made annual in 1426 in consequence of his exertions. The instrument published on this occasion recites, that 'for a long course of time' prior to 1426, 'the artificers and tradesmen have, at their own expence, acted several plays *.' Perhaps the disorders to which we have alluded arose from the non-interference of the clergy, for a time, in these representations; and hence it might be inferred, that the fraternity of *Corpus Christi* had relinquished them to the 'artificers and tradesmen' of York.

It is as certain, that churches and chapels of monasteries were the earliest theatres, as that ecclesiastics were the earliest actors of Miracle-plays: when the one practice or the other was discontinued, we have no distinct evidence †. With regard to the first, we are told, by Burnet ‡, that as late as 1542 Bishop Bonner issued a proclamation to the clergy of his diocese, prohibiting 'all manner of common plays, games or interludes to be played, set forth, or declared within 'their churches and chapels.' From the following passage in a tract printed in 1572, it appears that even

* See the Appendix to Drake's 'History of York,' where this document is inserted at length.

† The employment of churches for the representation of the *passio Christi* and the *Vita alicujus sancti* is justified by Johannes Aquila, in his *Enchiridion de omni ludorum genere*, cap. v. Oppenheim, 1516. He, however, denies the lawfulness of *Ludi theatrales, seu larvales in ecclesiis, seu aliis locis sacris.*

‡ Hist. of the Reform., 1 Coll. Rec., p. 255, edit. fol.

then interludes were occasionally played in churches: the author is speaking of the manner in which the clergy neglect their duties:—'He againe posteth it (the service) over as fast as he can gallop; for either 'he hath two places to serve, or else there are some 'games to be played in the afternoon, as lying for the 'whetstone, heathenishe dauncing for the ring, a 'beare or a bull to be bayted, or else jack-an-apes to 'ryde on horseback, or an *enterlude to be played;* 'and if no place else can be gotten, it must be *doone* '*in the church**.' As to the last, we know, (beyond what has been already proved by the accounts of Thetford Priory, and the inventory of theatrical properties belonging to the fraternity of *Corpus Christi*, at York,) that in 1519 Cardinal Wolsey found it necessary, in the regulations of the Canons Regular of St. Austin, to order, that the brothers should not be *lusores*†.

* *An answer to a certain Libel, intituled* 'an Admonition to the Parliament, by John Whitgift.' 4to. 1572.

† Malone (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 13, n. 7) follows Warton in a reference to Wolsey's ordinances for the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, 1519, in which the historian of English poetry supposes the Cardinal to forbid them to be *lusores aut mimici*. The original MS. of these regulations is in the British Museum (Cotton MS. Vesp. F. ix.), and there the passage stands as follows, from whence it will be seen that Warton misread an important word. *Statuimus et ordinamus quod hujusmodi canonici ad recreationes admissi, non ut antea* lusores *aut* minuti *de cætero nominentur, cum denominatio non nihil insolentiæ et levitatis præ se ferre videatur.* Warton lays stress upon *mimici* as explanatory of *lusores*, which explanation is not borne out by the true reading, *minuti*. My friend Mr. Amyot pointed out this mistake, on reference to Wilkins' *Concilia Mag. Brit. et Hib.* iii. 687, where Wolsey's regulations are inserted at length, and where it properly stands *minuti*, as in the original MS.

That ecclesiastics commonly performed in plays in 1511, is proved moreover by Dean Colet's *Oratio ad Clerum*, delivered in convocation in that year, in which he calls upon the heads of the church to remember and put in force the laws and rules which forbade the clergy to be *publici lusores**.

In cities and large towns, at a very early date, the getting up and acting of Miracle-plays devolved into the hands of the trading companies, each guild undertaking a portion of the performance, and sustaining a share of the expense. The authentic information regarding the exhibition of the *Corpus Christi* plays at Coventry, extends from 1416 to 1591, and during the whole of that period there is not the slightest indication that the clergy in any way co-operated†.

The records at Chester also establish, that the whole management of these representations there was in the hands of laymen. In 1409, we learn from Stowe‡, that the performance of religious plays in London was undertaken by the parish clerks; and there is no instance of the trading companies of the metropolis having been, at any date, so employed. In Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, which contains such repeated allusions

* The whole passage, with the translation of it printed by Berthelet, in which the words *publicus lusor* are rendered 'common player,' is quoted in the Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 59.

† Dugdale (Hist. Warw., p. 116) tells us that in the reign of Henry VII. these religious dramas were acted before the King 'with mighty state and reverence by the Grey-friars.' It is possible that they interfered on that occasion for the sake of more perfect exhibition.

‡ Chronicle, p. 549.

to pieces of this description, 'Joily Absalon,' the 'parish clerk,' is said to have sustained the part of Herod*.

The clergy sometimes assisted in dramatic representations, when it does not appear that they acted: in the performance of the play of St. George at Basingborne, in 1511, John Hobard, 'a brotherhood priest,' received 2*s.* 8*d.* for 'bearing the book,' or, in other words, for filling the office of prompter†. Perhaps he was the author of the piece represented.

It was provided in the Northumberland family, at the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII., that if the Earl's chaplain were also 'a maker of interludes,' he was to be allowed a servant for writing out the parts‡; and it has been seen in the Annals of the Stage (vol. i. p. 86), that William Peeres, who was the chaplain of the Northumberland family in 1526, was the author of an interlude, for making which he received 13*s.* 4*d.* Henry Medwall, the chaplain of Cardinal Morton, (who died just before the commencement of the sixteenth century,) was 'a maker of interludes,' and one of his productions of this kind

* Henry the Seventh's Household-book, which contains such frequent mention of 'players' of the King, of London, of Essex, of Mile-end, and of different nobility, states also that on January 1, 8 Henry VII. the King gave 20*s.* in reward 'to the players of Wymborne Minster.' Warton (H. E. P., iii. 42, edit. 8vo.) notices the play of the *Descensus ad Inferos*, performed before the King by the *Pueri Eleemosynarii* of Hyde Abbey and St. Swithin's Priory.

† Warton, H. E. P., iv. 151, edit. 8vo.

‡ Northumberland Household-book, p. 44, edit. 1827.

has survived, a very curious performance, which will be noticed in its proper place*.

It is thrown out merely as a conjecture, that the introduction of Miracle-plays in various parts of this kingdom, if not in various parts of Europe, was more contemporaneous than it has been hitherto believed to have been. They were adopted at Chester within four years after the institution of the *feast of Corpus Christi*, in 1264, and the same causes which led to their exhibition in that city would operate elsewhere. That the religious bodies, even in remote parts of the country, kept up a communication with other ecclesiastical establishments at home and abroad, requires no proof; and that which was the object of one must, more or less, have been the object of all. If it were considered the interest of the church that religious knowledge should to a certain degree be extended by these means, the attempt might be made in populous places simultaneously; or, supposing the experiment to have been successful in one town, the example without delay would be followed in others. The general, and sometimes particular, resemblances of these performances in distant parts of England may slightly confirm this notion. The fact would at least indicate, that the pieces had a common origin, if it did not lead to the conclusion that they were introduced at a common date.

Several passages might be quoted from Chaucer's

* 'Nature, a goodly interlude.' It was written about 1490, and printed, without any printer's name, about 1520.

Miller's Tale (already referred to) to show that the knowledge of Scripture then possessed by the lower orders was derived chiefly from Miracle-plays; one of these passages alludes to an incident found, with some variations, in the Widkirk collection, in the Chester series, and in the pageants represented at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but not at all warranted by Scripture; and it constitutes one of the particular resemblances to which allusion has just been made: it is where Nicholas reminds the Carpenter of the quarrel between Noah and his wife, before she could be induced to enter the Ark:—

> 'Hast thou not herde (qd Nicholas) also
> 'The sorow of Noe with his feleshippe,
> 'Or that he might gete his wife to shippe?'

In the same tale, when the carpenter speaks of 'Christ's Passion,' and swears by 'him that harrowed Hell,' the terms he employs seem to prove the popular source of his information.

An examination of the various Miracle-plays before enumerated supplies evidence, that at different periods they have been altered and interpolated; sometimes to render them more amusing, by adapting them on revival to existing manners, and sometimes for other causes, connected chiefly with the state of religion. That the Pseudo-evangelium was very early resorted to for subjects is clear, from the fact, that the most ancient piece of the kind extant, before noticed, is founded upon the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus —the 'harrowing' or invading of Hell. The Widkirk

collection has been handed down to us in a comparatively pure state, and whatever transcriptions the plays may have undergone previous to the existing copy, written about the reign of Henry VI., the additions have been few. They were certainly acted after the Reformation, and some doctrinal passages, regarding the seven sacraments and transubstantiation, were then omitted*. The series next in point of antiquity, as far as the age of the manuscript is concerned—the *Ludus Coventriæ*—has many comparative modernizations, which are also to be found, though not to the same extent, in the Chester Whitsun plays. Each succeeding transcriber seems to have taken liberties with the text, and as in some cases they followed the ancient mode of spelling, and in others adopted that which was employed when they lived, the Chester series affords specimens of orthography of different ages, from the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century †.

It remains to speak briefly of the mechanical contrivances for the representation of Miracle-plays.

They were acted on temporary erections of timber, indifferently called scaffolds, stages and pageants ‡;

* These passages are cancelled with red ink, but are still very legible: opposite one of them in the margin, and in a hand-writing perhaps of the reign of Edward VI. are the words 'corrected and not played.'

† Mr. Sharp, in his 'Dissertation,' has published a Coventry Miracle-play, from a transcript made by one Robert Croo, in 1534, who professes that it is 'newly correcte.'

‡ Scaffold and Stage we have, from the old French *Eschafaud* and *Estage*; but the etymology of pageant is by no means so clear. Mr.

and there is no doubt that in some instances they were placed upon wheels, in order that they might be removed to various parts of large towns or cities, and the plays exhibited in succession *. The testimony of Archdeacon Rogers, who wrote his account of Chester prior to the death of Elizabeth, seems decisive upon this point, as far as the performances there are concerned: he says that the scaffold consisted of two rooms, a higher and a lower: in the lower, the performers attired themselves, and in the higher they acted; which was open at the top, in order that all might be able to see the exhibition †. The same authority would lead to the conclusion, that only one

Sharp, in his 'Dissertation,' refers to all the authorities on the subject, and arrives at the conclusion, that Pageant is derived from the Greek πηγνυμι, in consequence of the pieces of timber of which it is composed being compacted together. The plays themselves were often called pageants, from the elevations on which they were exhibited.

* The scaffold, or at least the frame on wheels, on which it used to be placed, seems at a later date to have had the name of the *carriage*. By a MS. among the second Randle Holme's collections in the British Museum, it appears that 'at an assembly holden in the Common Hall of Pleas' in Chester, the Tailors' company had leave to build upon a piece of ground where their 'carriage-house' formerly stood. This was in 1631, and it is one of the latest and faintest traces regarding Miracle-plays in England.

† See Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 335. It is to be observed, that Mr. Sharp, in his work on the Coventry plays, adds a covering to the stage. Sometimes this lower room seems to have been employed to represent Hell, the Devils rising out of or falling into it. MS. Digby, 133, in the Bodleian, is the Miracle-play of Mary Magdalen's Repentance, and one of the stage directions in it is the following:—'Here enters the Prynse of the Devylls in a stage with hell underneth the stage.'

scaffold, stage, or pageant, was present at the same time in the same place, and doubtless such was the fact, according to the arrangement of the plays to which Archdeacon Rogers refers. It is indisputable, however, that the Chester Miracle-plays, as they exist in the British Museum, could not have been so represented. Some of the pieces require the employment of two, and even of three scaffolds, independent of other contrivances: the street also must have been used, as several of the characters enter and go out on horseback *.

The same remark will apply both to the Widkirk collection of plays, and to those in the volume called *Ludus Coventriæ:* in the latter, indeed, 'the place,' and 'the mid place,' are mentioned as the scene of part of the action; and there can be no doubt, from the terms of some of the stage directions, that two, three, and even four scaffolds were erected round a centre, the performers proceeding, as occasion required, from one to the other across 'the mid place†.'

* Strutt (*Manners and Customs*, iii. 130) says that the early stage consisted of 'three several platforms on stages raised one above another.' According to the *Histoire du Théâtre Français*, (Paris, 1745, ii. 290,) this was the contrivance sometimes resorted to abroad. When *Le Mistère de la Passion* was played at Antwerp, in 1486, 'Le 'Théâtre étoit construit au bas des Halles. Il y avoit cinq Escha- 'fauds à plusieurs étages, couverts d'ardoises: le Paradis, qui étoit 'le plus élevé, contenoit deux étages.' When it had previously been performed on the plain of Veximiel, there were nine stages 'de haut, ency commes degrés.' (Ibid. ii. 285.)

† This must also have been the case in the exhibition of the Digby Miracle-play of Mary Magdalen, in which a castle and a ship were

Without entering more at large into this point, which will be illustrated in the course of the examination of the productions themselves, it may be observed, that in one Widkirk play Cain is exhibited at plough with a team of horses; and in another it is absolutely necessary for the story, that something like the interior of a cottage should be represented, with a peasant's wife in bed, who pretends to have been just delivered of a child, which lies by her side in a cradle. The *castella picta*, enumerated among the properties of the fraternity of *Corpus Christi* at York, were probably, as before remarked, ornamented scaffolds, employed in the exhibition of the Miracle-plays of that city in the commencement of the fifteenth century.

In the following pages, a synoptical and comparative view is attempted of the three sets of Miracle-plays already enumerated, in order to show the manner in which the same subject was treated in different parts of the kingdom. This plan affords, also, the opportunity of pointing out such alterations as appear to have taken place at various dates; proceeding upon the supposition, that Miracle-plays were originally introduced into the populous districts of the kingdom contemporaneously. It has been a work of much labour, but I trust the result will be found more amusing than might be expected.

introduced, as will be seen hereafter. The 'place,' termed *placea*, and a *mons*, are also mentioned in the stage directions.

THE

WIDKIRK, CHESTER, AND COVENTRY MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE PLAYS.

THE Widkirk Miracle-plays are without any introductory matter.

The Chester Whitsun-plays are preceded by a kind of proclamation (called 'the Banes,'), which was made by certain Vexillators in various parts of the city on St. George's day, before the commencement of the performances. It goes through the subjects of the whole series, and attributes the authorship to 'Don Rondall, a monk of Chester Abbey,' and excuses the introduction of 'some things, not warranted by any writ,' on the ground that it was done 'to make sport,' and to 'glad the hearers.' The following stanza seems to prove that 'the Banes' were written not long after the completion of the Reformation*.

'As all that shall see them shall most welcome be,
'Soe all that here them, wee moste humblie praye,
'Not to compare this matter or storie

* Harl. MS., No. 1944, is a copy of Archdeacon Rogers's collections regarding Chester, which contains a curious addition to this introduc-

'With the age or tyme wherin we presentlye staye,
'But in the tyme of ignorance wherin we did straye:
'Then doe I compare, that this lande through out,
'Non had the like, nor the like dose sett out.'

The Chester-plays began on Whit-monday, and continued until Wednesday.

By a similar proclamation, which also details the subjects of all the plays in the volume called *Ludus Coventriæ*, it appears, that the plays began on Sunday, at six in the morning; and that they were acted at other places besides Coventry, is to be concluded from the fact, that the letter N is placed for the *Nomen* of the town, which was to be filled up, as occasion required, by the person making the proclamation. It is addressed to 'gentles and yeomanry,' and contrary to 'the Banes' at Chester, it asserts that no 'fables' are

tion. An excuse is there made for 'the crafts-men' by whom the plays were to be represented, who were not so well qualified as the 'players of price,' who might have been employed. It shows also, as might be proved from many authorities, that formerly those who played God usually had 'the face gilt;' and it requests, that as this gilding 'disfigured the man,' the omission of the Deity might be pardoned, and that the audience would not expect God 'to appear in shape or person,' but in 'a cloudy covering.' Whatever might be the particular nature of these performances at that time, it is clear that they took place within some building, for those who did not approve them were desired to withdraw, as 'open is the doore.'

In Mr. Sharp's work on the Coventry plays is an entry under the date of 1490, of 'a cheverel gyld for Ihe,' meaning 'a gilt beard for Jesus.' In one of the Moral plays formerly in the Collection of Dr. Cox Macro, and now in that of Hudson Gurney, Esq. M.P., *Wisdom* is introduced as a character, with his hair and beard gilt and curled.

intermixed with 'holy writ.'—The conclusion is as follows:—

'Now have we told yow all be dene*,
'The hool mater that we thynke to play;
'Whan that ye come that shall be sene
'This game wel pleyd in good a ray:
'Of holy wrytte this game shall bene,
'And of no fablys be no way.
'Now god you save from trey and tene†,
'For us that prayth upon that day,
'And qwyte them shall that mede.
'A Sunday next, yf that we may,
'At vj of the belle we gynne our play
'In N. town; wherfor we pray
'That god now be your spede.'

CREATION OF THE WORLD. REBELLION OF LUCIFER. DEATH OF ABEL.

THE first Play, or Pageant, of the Widkirk collection includes the Creation, with the rebellion and expulsion of Lucifer and his adherents. The Deity thus commences. Widkirk Plays.

'Ego sum alpha et o:
'I am the first the last also,
'Oone god in majestie,
'Mervelus of myght most,
'Fader and son and holy goost,
'On god in trinyte.'

The work of creation is then begun, and after the

* *be dene*, i.e. obediently.

† Treachery and sorrow.

cherubim have sung, the Deity descends from his throne and goes out: Lucifer usurps it, and asks the angels

'Gay felows, how semys now me?'

The good and bad angels disagree as to his appearance; but the dispute is terminated by the return of the Deity, who expels Satan and his adherents from Heaven. Adam and Eve are then created in Paradise, and this piece ends with a speech from Satan, lamenting their felicity. Of the temptation and fall of man we hear nothing, the second play relating to the murder of Abel. It is opened by Cain's ploughboy, called *Garçon*, with a sort of prologue, in which among other things he warns the spectators to be silent. It opens thus:—

'All hayll, all hayll, both blithe and glad,
'For here com I, a mery lad.
'Be peasse youre dyn, my masters bad,
'Or els the devill you spede.....
'Felowes, here I you forbede
'To make nother nose ne cry:
'Whoso is so hardy to do that dede,
'The devill hang hym up to dry.'

Cain enters with a plough and team, one of his mares being named 'Donnyng:' he quarrels with the *Garçon*, because he will not drive for him, after which Abel arrives, and wishes that 'God may speed Cain, and his man.'—Cain replies unceremoniously, desiring his brother to kiss the least honourable part of his person. The murder afterwards takes place, and Cain hides himself:—

'*Deus.* Cayn, Cayn!
'*Cayn.* Who is that callis me?
'I am yonder, may thou not se.
'*Deus.* Cayn, where is thy brother Abell?
'*Cayn.* What asks thou me?—I trow, in hell;
'At hell, I trow, he be:
'Who so were ther then myght he se.'

Cain, having been cursed, calls the boy, and beats him 'but to use his hand:' he acknowledges that he has slain his brother, and the boy advises running away, lest 'the bayles us take.' This is followed by some gross buffoonery, Cain making a mock proclamation 'in the King's name,' and the boy repeating it blunderingly after him. Cain sends him away with the plough and horses, and ends the pageant with a speech to the spectators, bidding them farewell for ever, before he goes to the devil. This brings us, in the Widkirk-plays, to Noah's flood.

The two earliest plays of the Chester series are occupied with the same period of Scripture history. The first opens with a long speech from the Deity, asserting his power and glory in alliterative rhyme, and calling himself, Chester Plays.

'Prince principall proved in my perpetuall provydence.'

The rebellion of Lucifer occurs before the creation of the world, the chief adherent of the Devil being a fiend named 'Light-burne.' After they are expelled, we hear of another companion of Lucifer, called 'Ruffyn;' and, in a dialogue between them, they resolve 'to make mankinde to doe amisse,' before in

fact man has been formed. The second pageant comprises the creation, and the temptation * and fall: after this event the direction in the margin is, that Adam and Eve shall cover *genitalia sua cum foliis*, whereas until then *stabunt nudi, et non verecundabuntur*. They are driven out of Paradise, Abel is killed, and Cain cursed. During this piece 'mynstrells playinge' is noted in the margin four times, in order to relieve its tediousness, as it is not enlivened by any comic matter.

The same incidents are included in the two first of the Coventry plays†: the rebellion of the angels, the creation, the temptation, and the fall of man, follow each other. When the Deity asks the Devil why he seduced Adam and Eve, he replies:—

Coventry Plays.

'I shall the sey wherffor and why
'I dede hem all this velony;
'For I am ful of gret envy,
'Of wroth and wyckyd hate,
'That man shulde leve above the sky,
'Where as sum tyme dwellyd I,
'And now I am cast to helle sty,
'Streyte out at hevyn gate.'

Cain's sacrifice not being accepted, he exclaims—

* The stage-direction before the temptation is, 'then the serpent shall come up out of a hole;' and the devil is described as 'walking' near Adam and Eve at the same time.

† In the old copy there is some error in numbering the Pageants, the second being numbered 3. Probably the first, which is long, was originally divided into two.

'What, thou stynkyng losel, and is it so?
'Doth god the love, and hatyht me?
'Thou shalt be ded—I shall the slo:
'Thi Lord, thi god, thou shalt nevyr se.'

After the murder, *Deus* says:—

'Cayn, come forth and answer me:
'Asoyle my qwestyon anon ryght.
'Thy brother Abel wher now is he?
'Ha done, and answere me as tyght *.
'*Cayn.* My brother's keper ho made me?
'Syn whan was I his kepyng knyght?
'I kan not telle wher that he be,' &c.

This Pageant, like those of Widkirk and Chester, ends with the malediction of Cain.

NOAH'S FLOOD.

The third Widkirk Pageant is entitled *Processus Noe cum filiis.* After Noah has lamented the sinfulness of the world, God is introduced repenting that he had created mankind, instructing Noah how to build the ark, and blessing him and 'his fry.' Noah's wife is of a very quarrelsome disposition, and they have a contest in the commencement, in which both swear by the Virgin Mary: her complaint is, that her husband does no work for his family; and he soon afterwards sets about the Ark, which is completed on the spot *in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti.* He then warns his wife of what is about to happen, and invites her on board:— Widkirk Plays.

* Directly.

'*Noe.* Raine as it is skill*,
'Here must us abide grace:
'Therfor, wife, with good will
'Come into this place.

'*Uxor.* Sir, for Jak nor for Gill,
'Will I turn my face,
'Till I have on this hill
'Spon a space
'On my rok.
'Well were he might get me:
'Now will I downe set me,
'Yet reede I no man let me†,
'For drede of a knok.

'*Noe.* Behold to the heven.
'The cataractes all
'They are open, full even
'Grete and small;
'And the planets seven
'Left has their stall.
'Thise thoners and levyn ‡
'Down gar § fall,
'Full stout,
'Both halles and bowers,
'Castels and towres ‖.
'Full sharpe are thise showers
'That renys ¶ aboute;
'Wherfor wife have done,
'Come into ship fast.

* As it is fit. † Yet I advise no man to hinder me.
‡ Thunders and lightning. § Make.
‖ Noah's description of the falling flood is by no means unpoetical: 'Behold the heavens! All the cataracts, both great and small, are open, 'and the seven planets have quitted their stations. Thunders and light-'ning strike down the strong halls and bowers, castles and towers.'
¶ Runs.

'*Uxor.* Yei, Noe, go cloute thy shone*,
'The better will thai last.'

The wives of their sons intercede in vain, and Noah is at last obliged to threaten his wife with the whip.

'*Noe.* In fayth, for youre long taryying
'You shall lik on the whip†.
'*Uxor.* Spare me not, I pray the;
'Bot even, as thou thynk,
'Thise grete words shall not flay me.
'*Noe.* Abide, dame, and drynk,
'For betyn shalt thou be
'With this staf to ‡ thou stynk.
'Are stroks good, say me?'

They then begin a new conflict, the wife not taking her castigation at all patiently: she gets the worst of it, and wishes her own husband dead, and the same good luck to all the wives among the spectators: Noah, on the other hand, warns all husbands to chastise their wives before they become too headstrong. The matter is accorded by the intervention of the sons, and ultimately they all go on board: three hundred and fifty days are said to pass while Noah and his family are conversing in the rain. A raven, and then a dove, are sent out, and the play ends with the debarkation from the Ark.

In the Chester pageant on the same subject, the building of the Ark occupies 'one hundred winters and twenty,' and the following direction shows that some art was employed in the getting up of the representation. 'Then Noy shall goe into

Chester Plays.

* Go nail thy shoes. † *Lick* or taste of the whip. ‡ Till.

'the Arke with all his famylye, his wife excepte: the 'Arke must be borded rounde about, and upon the 'bordes all the beastes and fowles here after rehearsed 'must be painted, that there wordes may agree with 'the pictures.'

Noah's wife has all along declared that she will not make one of the party, and when at last Noah warns her, that if she does not come she will be drowned, she replies that she will not go on board without her female friends:—

But I have my gossippes every eichone *,
'One foote further I will not gone.
'The shall not drowne, by saint John,
'And I maye save there life.'

She therefore desires Noah to 'row forth,' and 'get him a new wife.' Shem intercedes with his mother in vain, for she tells him,

'Sem, goe againe to him; I say,
'I will not come therein to day.
'*Noe.* Come in, wife, in twenty devills way,
'Or else stande there all day.'

She remains obstinate, although 'the floude comes flettinge in full fast,' and remains drinking with her 'good gossippes,' until Japhet and Shem force her into the Ark. Noah, willing to be reconciled, welcomes her, but she strikes him, exclaiming, 'Have thou that for thy note.' The conclusion of the pageant is the covenant of the rainbow, and the Deity takes leave of Noah with 'now farewell, my darling deare.'

The Coventry play on the same subject is with-

* *Every eichone* is *everich one*, or every one.

out the incident of the quarrel between Noah and his wife: on the contrary, she is very glad to escape. She says:— Coventry Plays.

'Alas, for gret ruthe of this gret vengeaunce,
'Gret doyl * it is to se this watyr so wyde,
'But yit thankyd be god of this ordenaunce,
'That we be now savyd on lyve to abyde†.'

The death of Cain, by a broad arrow, shot by blind Lamech, who mistook Cain for some beast, forms an incident in the fourth Coventry pageant.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

The fourth Widkirk pageant relates entirely to the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. The father and son

* Sorrow, or dole.

† In the pageant preserved in the appendix to Brand's *History of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, a dispute between Noah and his wife is also introduced, but with more art and circumstance. When the Patriarch has built the Ark, the Devil tries to prevail upon Noah's wife not to enter it, observing,

'I swear thee, by my crooked snout,
'All that thy husband goes about
'Is little for thy profit:'

and then he gives her a poisonous draught for her husband, which he himself tastes, but does not swallow. She tells her husband:

'By my faith, I no reck
'Whether thou be friend or foe:
'The Devil of hell thee speed,
'To ship when thou shalt go.'

Noah is so provoked, that he belabours her lustily, while she does not seem able to afford much resistance. At the conclusion, an Angel appears and congratulates him on his victory. When they are all on board, the Devil pronounces a curse upon the spectators, which ends the performance.

are accompanied on their way 'forth of towne,' by Widkirk two boys and a jackass, whom, before the Plays. sacrifice, they leave behind. When Abraham is about to slay his son, Isaac exclaims:—

'The shynyng of your bright blade,
'It gars me quake for ferde to dee.
'*Abraham.* Therfor groflyng* thou shalt be layde;
'Then when I stryke thou shal not se.'

In order to delay the fatal stroke, Abraham pretends that he has lost something, and turning away, says very tenderly:—

'What water shotes in both myn eeyn!
'I were lever than all warldly wyn,
'That I had fon hym onys unkynde;
'Bot no defawt I faund hym in.
'I wold be dede for hym or pynde;
'To slo hym thus I thynk grete syn:'

or in other words, 'What water shoots into both mine 'eyes? I should have been more glad than of all 'worldly gain, if I had found him once unkind; but I 'never found him in fault. I would willingly die or 'endure suffering for him: to slay him thus I think 'a great sin.'

The Angel prevents the blow, but Abraham will not talk, even with the heavenly messenger, till he has released, and kissed his son.

The Chester play treats this story even more pathe- Chester tically, and, as a contrast, it is opened with a Plays. comic prologue by a person who calls himself 'Gobbet on the Green.' It ends thus:—

* *Grovelling*, on his stomach.

'My name is Gobbet on the greene;
'With you I may no longer bene.
'Farewell, my lordinges, by dene,
'For letting of your playe*.'

The following is part of the dialogue between Abraham and Isaac:—

'*Isaacke.* Yf I have tresspassed in any degree,
'With a yarde you may beate me.
'Put up your sworde, yf your wilbe,
'For I ame but a chylde.
'*Abraham.* Oh, my deare sonne, I ame sorye
'To doe to thee this greate anoye.
'God's commaundement doe must I:
'His workes are aye full mylde.
'*Isaacke.* Woulde god, my mother were here with me!
'She woulde kneele downe upon her knee,
'Prayinge you, father, yf yt might be,
'For to save my life.'

Isaac expresses his readiness to submit to the will of God, and reminds Abraham that he has other sons at home whom he may love. Abraham 'wrings his hands,' and declares himself almost out of his senses for grief. Isaac on his knees asks his father's blessing, and requests him to hide his eyes, that he may not see the sword when it is raised to strike him. Abraham entreats him not to add to his agony, and calls upon Christ to have pity upon him. The stage direction at the close is: 'Here let Abraham make a signe, as 'though he would slaye and cut off his head with his

* The following stage direction, which immediately succeeds, shows that this speech was intended as a prologue. 'Here Abraham, having restored his brother Loth into his owne place, doth first *begyne* '*the playe*, sayinge...'

'sworde; then let the Angell come and take the 'sworde by the ende, and staye it.'

In the course of this piece we meet with the first mention of the *Expositor* (sometimes also called the *Doctor*), who makes several explanatory addresses to the audience. A messenger delivers an epilogue, in which he announces the subject of the next play.

Coventry Plays.

The Coventry Pageant, which relates, like those of Widkirk and Chester, solely to the sacrifice of Isaac, is much inferior. There is one natural touch in it, however, which deserves notice: during the whole way Abraham is dumb with grief at the contemplation of the sacrifice he is compelled to make; and Isaac remarks unconsciously and innocently:—

'Fayre fadyr, ye go ryght stylle:
'I pray you, fadyr, speke unto me.'

JACOB AND ESAU—PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH—PLAGUES OF EGYPT—MOSES—BALAK AND BALAAM—THE TEN TABLES.

Widkirk Plays.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh Pageants of the Widkirk series may be dismissed briefly, and they conclude that portion which is devoted to the Old Testament. The fifth is occupied by the story of Jacob and Esau, and is imperfect. The sixth is called *Processus Prophetarum*, in which Moses, David, Daniel, Sybilla, &c. announce the coming of the Saviour. The seventh is a play peculiar to this collec-

tion, and relates to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. After a long conference between the Deity and Moses, the latter works the miracle before Pharaoh of the conversion of his rod into a serpent. Pharaoh exclaims:—

'A, ha, dog, the devyll the drowne!'

and Moses takes the serpent by the tail, saying,

'Lo, Sir, behold.

'*Pharao.* With ylahayl*.

'Certes, this is a sotell swayn.'

This is followed by the departure of Moses and 'his meyney;' and *hic pertransient mare* is the stage direction. Pharaoh and his host pursuing them are supposed to be drowned, the last words of the King being;

'Heyf up your hertes unto Mahownde,
'He will be nere us in our nede.—
'Help! the raggyd devyll! we drowne!
'Now mon we pay for all our dede.'

Moses concludes the play in the following lines:—

'Heven, thou attend, I say in syght,
'And erth, my wordys here what I tell.
'As rayn or dew on erth doys lyght,
'And waters, herbys and trees full well,
'Gyf lovyng to godds majeste.
'Hys dedys ar done, hys ways are trew:
'Honowred be he in trynyte,
'To hym be honoure and vertew.'

In the course of this piece, the seven plagues are represented falling upon the Egyptians, and when the people express their sufferings, Pharaoh answers them;

* Evil, or ill hail.

'What, raggyd, the devyll of hell, alys you so to cry?'

In the Chester series, the fifth is the last play which relates to the Old Testament, and it is headed *De Mose, et Rege Balaak, et Balaam.* In the course of it King Balak swears by Mars:

Chester Plays.

'Therefore my god, and godes all,
'O mighty Marse, on thee I call,
'With all the powers infernall,
'Rise now, and helpe at neede.'

At the termination are the following lines, proving that the five pageants of the Old Testament occupied the first day's exhibition at Chester.

'Nowe, worthy sires, bouth greate and small,
'You have we shewed this storye before,
'And yf yt be pleasinge to you all,
'To morrowe nexte you shall have more.'

In the *Ludus Coventriæ*, the last piece strictly belonging to the Old Testament is the sixth, but perhaps the seventh, which is merely a deduction of the genealogy of Christ from David, may be included. The sixth is occupied by the delivery of the Tables to Moses, who explains and enforces all the commandments in succession, and ends with these two lines:

Coventry Plays.

'Fare well, gode frendys, for hens wyll I wende:
'My tale I have taught yow, my wey now I goo.'

Thus we see, that seven pageants of the Widkirk collection, five of the Chester series, and seven of the volume called *Ludus Coventriæ*, apply to events of the Old Testament.

THE SALUTATION—CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Augustus Cæsar opens the eighth Widkirk pageant with a long speech, commanding silence, and swearing 'by Mahownde,' that he will kill on the spot every one who makes the least noise. He then imposes what is called the 'head-penny,' and in the course of the action, a messenger goes to, and returns from Judea. The *annunciatio* follows, forming the ninth play, and the Deity declares the reasons why his son 'takes manhood.'—Gabriel salutes the Virgin with, Widkirk Plays.

'Hayll, Mary, gracious,
'Hayll, madyn, and god's spouse
'Unto the I lowte*.
'Of all vyrgyns thou art qwene,
'That ever was or shall be seyn,
'Withouten dowte.
'Hayll, Mary, and well thow be,
'My lord of heven is wyth the.'

Joseph, arriving soon afterwards, finds Mary pregnant, and laments 'that ever I wed so young a wife.' Mary declares that 'the God of Heaven' is father of her child; but Joseph disbelieves her, and declares, that he 'will not father it,' until the Angel descends, and convinces him at once of the Virgin's innocence and purity. Joseph then humbly apologises for his unjust suspicions:—

'Bot I wote well, my leman fre,
'I have trespast to god and the:
'Forgyf me, I the pray.'

* Bow.

She immediately consents to pardon him. In this pageant the Angel has informed the Virgin, that Elizabeth is pregnant, and in the next, which is very short, she and Joseph pay a visit to her. This brings us to the *Pagina Pastorum*, which is the tenth of the Widkirk series.

The sixth pageant of the Chester Miracle-plays is entitled *De Salutatione et nativitate Salvatoris*, and here we meet with the subsequent stanzas in French, as part of a speech by Augustus Cæsar, here called *Octavianus*.

Chester Plays.

'Seigneurs tous si assembles,
'Ames proles estates,
'Jey posse faire larment et leez,
'Et metten en languore:
'Vous toutes si prest ne sortes
'De fayre intentes movolentes,
'Car Ihesu soveraigne bene sages
'Et demaund Emperour.

'Jay si personne mille si able,
'Jey su tent faire et beable
'En tresarois ne tresagait
'Mes de toile plerunt,
'Destret et sage su en counsell
'A mi on dame et on prsel,
'Declare sake et mater frail
'Un teel nest pas unmaine*.'

It is not easy, after the corruptions of, perhaps, between three and four centuries, during which this

* These lines are taken from Harl. MS., No. 2124, which is not that usually followed in the extracts already made. In Harl. MS., No. 2013, only the first stanza is inserted, and that as prose.

passage had been handed down from transcript to transcript, to make much sense out of it; but it seems to be a declaration on the part of Augustus, of his power, wealth, and personal perfections, which quite falls in with the usual course on such occasions. He sends a boy into Judea, to obtain a penny each from the inhabitants, telling him to take 'the highe horse beside Boughton' for his journey. Boughton, near Chester, was the place of execution, and by the 'high horse' there, Augustus, probably, means the gallows *. The boy must have been mounted at the time, for he replies satirically:

'Graunt mercy, lord, pardy,
'This hackney will well serve me;
'For a great lord of your degree
'Shold ryde in such araye.'

* This passage, and the reply, are only found in Harl. MS., 2124. Mr. Markland was kind enough to point out this local allusion, which had escaped me. Ulpian Fulwell, in his *Like will to Like*, calls the gallows a 'two legged mare.'

'This peece of land, whereto you inheritours are,
'Is called the land of the *two legged mare*.
'In this peece of ground there is a mare in deed,
'Which is the quickest mare in England for speede.'

The anonymous author of a poem, written in the reign of Queen Mary, called *Pore Help*, has the same allusion:—

'And are you now so bragg?
'You may come to tagg,
'Your hap may be to wagg
'Upon *a wooden nagg*;
'Or els a fair fyre
'May happ to be your hyre.'

The whole is reprinted by Strype, Eccl. Mem., ii., Rep. of Orig. 34. There was, however, a different sort of punishment, called riding the wooden horse.

The birth of the Saviour in this pageant takes place on the stage. Joseph brings in the midwives, and Mary observes:—

'Sir, they be welcome withouten were *;
'But god will worke of his power
'Full soone for me, my lefe fere †,
'As best is now and aye.
Tunc paululum acquiescunt.
'A, Josephe, tydinges a righte!
'I have a sonne, a sweete wight.
'Lord, thanked be thou, moch of might,
'For proved is thy postee ‡.'

Coventry Plays.

The Coventry plays, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, which all relate to matters connected with the birth of the Saviour, much of which is not contained in any other series, deserve more particular notice. In the first of these a personage, called *Contemplation*, is brought forward, who subsequently acts as prologue-speaker, and explains and moralizes on the events, but is in no way concerned in the action. This is an allegorical impersonation, and there can be no doubt that it was introduced into these performances posterior to their first production, whether in French or English. The eighth play refers to the barrenness of Anna, and the promised birth of the Virgin. The following is part of the address of *Contemplation* in opening the ninth play.

'Sovereynes, ye hav sen shewyd yow before,
'Of Joachym and Anna here both there holy metynge:
'How our lady was conseyvid, and how she was bore.

* Dispute. † Dear companion. ‡ Power.

'We passe ovyr that, breffnes of tyme consynderynge,
'And how our lady, in her tendyr age and ying,
'Into the temple was offryd,' &c.

The presentation then takes place in dumb show, *Contemplation* commenting upon what passes. The virgin is represented as a child of three years old in the ninth play, and we are informed by *Contemplation* that fourteen years are supposed to elapse between that and the tenth play. *Contemplation's* epilogue to it ends in these lines:

'Hath pacyens with us, we besech yow her,
'And in short spas
'The parlement of hefne * sone shal ye se,
'And how goddys sone come man shall he,
'And how the salutation after shal be
'Be goddys holy gras.'

'The Parliament of Heaven' is not opened in the next play (the tenth), which is founded upon that part of the apocryphal gospel called 'Mary.' The Bishop summons the males of the kindred of David to appear in the temple, each bearing a white rod, it being declared from heaven, that he whose rod should 'bloom and bear,' should be the husband of the Virgin. Joseph is pointed out by the miracle, and he is most reluctantly married, declaring,

'An olde man may nevyr thryff
'With a yonge wyff, so god me save ....
'If I here chyde she wolde clowte my cote,
'Blere myne ey, and pyke out a mote;
'And thus oftyn tymes it is sene.'

* Heaven.

When during the marriage ceremony he is asked, 'whether he will have this maiden,' he replies with great simplicity:

'Nay, sere, so mote I thryff,
'I have right no nede therto;'

but they are united, notwithstanding. Joseph resolves that he will not live with Mary, and she makes a vow of chastity. During the piece, he goes out and hires 'a lytyl praty hous' for her residence. The progress of the story is interrupted by 'the Parliament of Heaven,' in the eleventh pageant, in which the Father, Son, Veritas, Justitia, Misericordia, Pax and Spiritus Sanctus are the speakers. Gabriel then descends, and salutes Mary with an anagrammatic pun:

'Heyl ful of grace, god is with the!
'Amonge all women blyssyd art thu;
'Here this name Eva is turnyd Ave,
'That is to say, with owte sorwe * Av ye now.'

The following singular stage direction subsequently occurs—'Here the holygost disecendit, with 3 bennys † 'to our lady: the sone of the godhed next, with 3 'bennys to the holygost: the fadyr godly, with 3 'bennys to the sone; and so entre all thre to here 'bosome.' The twelfth play opens very dramatically, with the return of Joseph after an absence of some months.

'*Joseph.* How, dame, how! undo youre dore undo.
'Are ye at hom? Why speke ye notht?
'*Susanna.* Who is ther? Why cry ye so?
'Tell us youre herand. Wyl ye ought?

* Sorrow. † *Benedicites*, written *bcmys*.

'*Joseph.* Undo your dore, I sey yow to,
'For to com in is all my thought.
'*Maria.* It is my spowse that spekyth us to.
'Ondo the dore, his wyl were wrought.—
'Well come hom, myn husbond dere,
'How have ye ferd in fer countre?
'*Joseph.* To gete oure levynge, withowtyn were,
'I have sore laboryd for the and me.'

Afterwards he discovers the pregnancy of Mary, and exclaims in great grief:—

'Alas, alas! my name is shent!
'All men may me now dyspyse,
'And seyn, olde cokwold, thi bowe is bent
'Newly now, after the Frensche gyse;'

a remarkable expression that seems to be proverbial.

The descent of an angel explains the whole matter, greatly to Joseph's satisfaction, and, as in the Widkirk play, he makes suitable amends. The thirteenth play consists of the visit of Joseph and Mary to Elizabeth, with some interlocutions by *Contemplation*. The conclusion of it only is curious, as an officer of the Bishop's court summons a great number of persons to appear before his Lordship, at the trial of Joseph and Mary, all of them with English names, obviously inserted for the sake of producing merriment among the spectators.

'I warne you here all a bowte,
'That I somown you, all the rowte,
'Loke ye fayl for no dowte
'At the court to pere:
'Both John Jurdon and Geffrey Gyle,
'Malkyn Mylkedoke and fayr Mabyle,
'Stevyn Sturdy and Jak at the style,
'And Sawdyr sadelere.'

The most remarkable part of the address, however, is the information, near the close, that money was collected for the performances:—

'And loke ye rynge wele in your purs,
'For ellys your cawse may spede the wurs,
'Thow that ye slynge goddys curs
'Evyn at myn hede.'

In the fourteenth Pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ* Mary is brought to trial before Ahizachar, the Bishop, for infidelity, and Joseph for tamely submitting to it. Their accusers are two more allegorical impersonations, whose qualities are indicated by being called *Primus et Secundus Detractor.* The foundation of this piece is in the Pseudo-evangelium. The purity of Joseph is established by his drinking, without any ill effects, a liquid which, were he guilty, would produce 'some maculation plain on his face:' Mary offers to go through the same purgation, declaring 'I trespacyd nevyr with erthly wyght;' on which *Primus Detractor* observes:—

'In feyth I suppose, that this woman slepte
'Withowtyn all coverte, whyle that it dede snowe,
'And a flake therof into hyre mowthe crepte,
'And therof the chylde in hyre wombe doth growe.'

Secundus Detractor, following up the joke, warns her to take care, when the child is born, not to let the sun shine upon it. The Virgin drinks without any change in her appearance; and *Primus Detractor,* asserting that Ahizachar had purposely changed the draught, is compelled by the Bishop to swallow what is left, and he is thus suddenly converted from his unbelief.

An incident in the fifteenth Coventry play is the same as is found in the Christmas Carol, yet often sung. Mary, seeing a cherry-tree, longs for some of the fruit; and Joseph tells her, that he who is the father of her child may procure it for her: the tree instantly bows down to her hand. The rest of the piece is filled with the birth of the Saviour on the stage, nearly as in the Chester series.

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

In the Widkirk manuscript are found two separate plays on the adoration by the Shepherds. After a soliloquy by *Primus Pastor*, likening the uncertainty of life to the variableness of the weather, *Secundus Pastor* (named John Horne) enters and quarrels with him: *Tertius Pastor* (called Jak, 'a *garçon*') who arrives on horseback, parts them, and tells them that they are Widkirk Plays.

'Foles al sam *;
'Sagh † I never none so fare,
'Bot the foles of Gotham.'

They are reconciled and sit down to supper, refreshing themselves with 'ale of Hely' (q. Ely): they afterwards sing, and while they are lying asleep the angel announces to them the birth of Christ, and waking they behold the star. After referring to Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c. *Tertius Pastor* quotes Virgil (Ecl. iv. 6), though not very correctly, and transposing the lines:

* Together. † Saw.

Jam nova progenies cœlo de mittitur alta
Jam rediet virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.

Secundus Pastor protests against this display of learning:

'Tell us no clerge:
'I hold you of the freres*.
'It semys by your Laton,
'Ye have lerd† your Caton.'

They proceed without delay to Bethlehem, and make their offerings to the 'little tyn mop,' one giving 'a spruse cofer,' another 'a ball,' and the third 'a botell.'.

The second Pageant, regarding the shepherds, is the most singular piece in the whole collection: it is not a religious play, but literally a farce, by no means destitute of humour, intended to diversify the performances. The three shepherds, after conversing about their shrewish wives and other familiar topics, are about to sing (the first agreeing to take 'the tenory,' the second 'the tryble so hyé,' and the third 'the meyne'), when they are interrupted by the arrival of an acquaintance, named Mak, who, it seems, does not bear the best reputation for honesty. After supper, they all lie down to sleep, but the shepherds take care that Mak shall lie between them, that he may not get up unobserved and steal their sheep. While they are snoring he contrives to escape, and makes off with a fat wether, which he carries home to his wife, as he had done many before. She is afraid of his being at last detected and hanged, for

* Friars. † Learnt.

——' So long goys the pott
' To the water, men says,
' Comys it home broken.'

Mak is himself in considerable alarm lest the shepherds should wake, and finding both him and the sheep missing, conclude that he had stolen it. The wife proposes this scheme:—that if the shepherds came, Mak should pretend that she had just been brought to bed, and that the sheep, which was to be covered up in the cradle, was the child she had produced. Mak agrees to the plan, but to avoid suspicion returns, and lies down with the shepherds without his absence having been noticed. When the shepherds wake, they are so refreshed, that one of them says, ' As lyght I me feyll, as leyfe on a tre;' but Mak pretends that he has lain awkwardly in one position so long, that it has given him a crick in the neck. The shepherds walk to the fold, and Mak hastens home, where he takes care that his wife and the dead sheep are put to bed and cradled in due form. The shepherds soon miss their wether, and swear by St. Thomas of Kent, that they suspect Mak: they go to his cottage, and making a noise to be admitted, Mak entreats them not to disturb his wife, telling them what has happened. She, too, joins in the entreaty, as the least sound goes through her head, and the shepherds are for a time imposed upon. They are on the point of departing, but return and ask to see the child, and one of them offers to give it sixpence: Mak replies that it is sleeping, and that it cries sadly when it is waked; but he cannot keep them

from lifting up the coverlet of the cradle. There they see their sheep, and recognise it by the ear-mark, although the wife would fain persuade them that it is a child which had been transformed by an evil spirit *. This part of the representation is so singular, novel, and humorous, that I should not be excused if I did not give a much longer specimen of it than usual, beginning with the arrival of the three shepherds at the door of Mak's cottage, after they have discovered the loss of their wether.

'*Sec. Past.* ———————— Mak!
'Undo youre dore soyne †.
'*Mak.* 'Who is that spak
'As it were noyne ‡?—On loft,
'Who is that, I say?
'*Ter. Past.* Goode felowse, were it day.
'*Mak.* As far as ye may, good, speke soft
'Over a seke womans hede,
'That is at mayll easse §.
'I had lever be dede,
'Or she had any diseasse.
'*Uxor.* 'To an othere stede. ‖
'I may not well qweasse. ¶—So! hee!

* In the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, iii. 479, is a balladised Eskdale tradition (by the Rev. John Marriott), of Archie Armstrong having stollen a sheep and placed it in a cradle, and by pretending that it was a child, deceiving those who came in pursuit of him and it. It is clear from this Miracle-play, that the story is much older than the time of Charles the First's banished jester. It however tends to confirm, in some slight degree, the northern origin of the Widkirk-plays.

† Soon. ‡ Noon. § *Mal-aise.*
‖ Place. ¶ Q. Be quiet.

Ich fote that ye trede
'Goys thorow my nese *.

'*Prim. Past.* Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
'How fare ye, I say?

'*Mak.* Bot ar ye in this towne to day?
'Now, how fare ye?
'Ye have ryn in the myre,
'And are weytt yit:
'I shall make you a fyre,
'If ye will sytt.
'A nores † wold I hyre,
'Think ye on yit—a seson.
'Well qwytt is my hyre;
'My dreme this is it.
'I have barnes ‡, if ye knew,
'Well mo then enewe;
'Bot we must drynk as we brew,
'And that is bot reson.
'I wold ye dynyd or ye yode §.
'Me thynk that ye swette.

'*Sec. Past.* Nay, nawther mendys oure mode
'Drynk nor mette.

'*Mak.* Why, sir, alys you oght bot goode?

'*Ter. Past.* Yee, our shepe that we gett,
'Are stollyn as thay yode.
'Our losse is grett.

'*Mak.* Syrs, drynks.
'Had I bene thore,
'Som shuld have boght it full sore.

'*Prim. Past.* Mary, som men trowes that ye wore;
'And that us forthynks ||.

'*Sec. Past.* Mak, some men trowys
'That it shud be ye.

'*Ter. Past.* Ayther ye or youre spouse:
'So say we.

* Nose or head. † Nurse. ‡ Children.
§ Went. || We believe.

'*Mak.* Now, if ye have suppowse
'To Jyll or to me,
'Com and ryp oure house,
'And then may ye se—who had hir.
'If I any shepe sott,
'Aythercow or stott,
'And Jyll, my wyfe, rose not
'Here syn she lade hir.
'As I am trew and lele *,
'To God here I pray,
'That this be the fyrst mele,
'That I shall ete this day.

'*Prim. Past.* Mak, as I have ceyll †,
'Avise the, I say.
'He lernyd tymely to steyll
'That couth not say nay.

'*Uxor.* I swelt!
'Owt, thefys, fro my wonys ‡!
'Ye com to rob us for the nonys §.

'*Mak.* Here ye not how she gronys?
'Youre hartys shuld melt.

'*Uxor.* 'Outt, thefys, fro my barne
'Negh hym not thor.

'*Mak.* Wyst ye how she had farne ‖,
'Youre hartys wold be sore.
'Ye do wrang, I you warne,
'That thus commys before,
'To a woman that has farne.
'Bot I say no more.

'*Uxor.* A, my medyll!
'I pray to God so mylde,
'If ever I you begyld,
'That I ete this chylde,
'That lygs in this cradyll.

* Loyal. † *Ciel*, Heaven. ‡ Dwelling.
§ Purpose. ‖ Farrow'd

' *Mak.* Peasse, woman, for Gods payn,
' And cry not so.
' Thou spyllys thy brane,
' And maks me full wo.
Sec. Past. I trow, oure shepe be slayn.
' What fynde ye two* ?
Ter Past. All wirk we in vayn:
' As well may we go.—But hatters,
' I can fynde no flesh,
' Hard nor nesh,
' Salt nor fresh,
' Bot two torne platers.
' Whik catell bot this
' Tame nor wylde,
' None, as have I blys,
' As lowde as hesmylde †.
' *Uxor.* No, so God me blys,
' And gyf me joy of my chylde.
' *Sec. Past.* Syr, don ‡.
' *Prim. Past.* We have markyd amys:
' I hold us begyld.
' Syr, our lady hym save,
' Is your chyld a knave?
' *Mak.* Any lord myght hym have,
' This chyld to his son.
' When he wakys he kyppys,
' That joy is to se.
' *Ter. Past.* In good tyme to his hyppys,
' And in celé.
' Bot who was his gossyppys,
' So sone rede § ?

* The two other shepherds had probably been searching the cottage, and here returned.

† This is one of the expressions I am unable to interpret. Possibly we should read ' as lewde as he smelde,' *i. e.* as wicked as he smelt.

‡ Perhaps, ' Sir, we have done.' § Ready.

'*Mak.* So fare fall thare lyppys—
'*Prim. Past.* Hark, now a le *.
'*Mak.* So God thaym thank,
'Parkyn and Gybon Waller, I say,
'And gentyll John Horne, in good fay,
'With the greatt shank.
'He made all the garray,
'*Sec. Past.* Mak, freynds will we be,
'For we are all oone.
'*Mak.* We now I hald for me,
'For mends gett I none.
'Farewell all three,
'All glad were ye gone.
'*Ter. Past.* Fare words may ther be
'Bot luf † is there none—this yere.
'*Prim. Past.* Gaf ‡ ye the chyld any thyng?
'*Sec. Past.* I trow, not oone farthyng.
'*Ter. Past.* Fast, agane will I flyng:
'Abyde ye me there.—
'Mak, take it no grefe
'If I come to thi barne.
'*Mak.* Nay, thou dos me greatt repriefe,
'And fowll has thou farne.
'*Ter. Past.* The child will it not grefe,
'That lytyll day starne §.
'Mak, with your leyfe,
'Let me gyf youre barne—bot vj pence.
'*Mak.* Nay, do way: he slepys.
'*Ter. Past.* Me thynk he pepys.
'*Mak.* When he wakyns he wepys:
'I pray you go hence.
'*Ter. Past.* Gyf me lefe hym to kys,
'And lyft up the clowtt.—
'What the devill is this?
'He has a long snowte.

* Lie. † Love. ‡ Gave. § Day star.

'*Prim. Past.* He is markyd amys.
We wate ill abowte.
'*Sec. Past.* Ill spon weft, I wys,
'Ay commys foull owte.—Ay so!
'He is lyke to our shepe.
'*Ter. Past.* How, Gyb! may I pepe?
'*Prim. Past.* I trow, kynde will crepe,
'Where it may not go.
'*Sec. Past.* This was a qwantt gawde *,
'And a farcast:
'It was a hee'frawde.
'*Ter. Past.* Yee, syrs, wast.
'Lett bren this bawde,
'And bynd hir fast.
'A fals skawde,
'Hang at the last—so shall thou.
'Wyll ye se how thay swedyll
'His foure feytt in the medyll?
'Sagh † I never in a credyll
'A hornyd lad or now.
'*Mak.* Peasse byd I. What!
'Lett be your fare.
'I am he that hym gatt,
'And yond woman hym bare.
'*Prim. Past.* What, devill, shall he hatt ‡?
'Mak, lo, God, Mak's ayre §!
'*Sec. Past.* Lett be all that.
'Now, God gyf hym care,—I sagh.
'*Uxor.* A pratty child is he,
'As sytts on a woman's kne,
'A dylly downe, pardie,
'To gar a man laghe ||.
'*Ter. Past.* I know hym by the eare marke,
'That is a good tokyn.

* A quaint toy. † Saw. ‡ Ha' it.
§ Q. Heir. || To make a man laugh.

'*Mak.* I tell you, syrs, hark;
'His noyse was brokyn,
'Sythen told me a clerk
'That he was forspokyn.
'*Prim. Past.* This is a fals wark:
'I wold fayn be wrokyn*.—Lett wepyn†.
'*Uxor.* He was takyn with an elfe;
'I saw it my self:
'When the clok stroke twelf,
'Was he forshapyn.'

All this, and more which might be quoted from the same piece, shews that something very like broad comedy, as a dramatic representation, is a great deal older than it has ever been supposed to be. The Shepherds beat Mak until they are all tired, and lie down to rest, when the star in the east appears, and *Angelus cantat gloria in excelsis.* After repeating and referring to the prophesies regarding the birth of the Saviour, the Shepherds hasten to Bethlem, where *Primus Pastor* gives Jesus 'a bob of cherrys,' *Secundus Pastor* a bird, and *Tertius Pastor* a tennis ball.

Chester Plays.

The most remarkable feature in the Chester pageant *De Patoribus greges pascentibus* (No. 7) is, as in the Widkirk play, the total abandonment of all dramatic propriety: the Shepherds who proceed to Bethlem are named Harvey, Tudd, and Trowle, and are Cheshire or Lancashire men by birth and habits. One of them says of himself,

'From comely Conway unto Clyde,
'Under tyldes them to hyde,

* Revenged. † Cease crying.

'A better sheapearde on no side,
'Noe earthly man may have.'

They regale upon 'Jannocks * of Lancashire,' butter of Blacon, cheese, and Halton ale. For the sake of variety they have a quarrel and a fight, just before the appearance of the Star in the East. Trowle's gift to the Saviour is 'a pair of his wife's old hose;' and of three boys, afterwards introduced with offerings, one makes a present of his nut-hook, so that

'To pull down aples peares and plomes
'Olde Joseph shall not need to hurte his thombes.'

The Shepherds in the Coventry play are extremely learned in the prophesies, and their adoration occupies the principal part of the piece. Coventry Plays.

OBLATION OF THE THREE KINGS.

The *Oblatio Magorum*, forming the thirteenth Pageant of the Widkirk series, first introduces us to Herod †, who is very boastful of his Widkirk Plays.

* '*Jannock.* A loaf made of oat-meal levened.' *Tim Bobbin's Lancashire Dialect.*

† Chaucer, in his *Miller's Tale*, refers to the performances of Herod in the old Playes of Miracles:—

'He plaieth Herode on a skaffold hie.'

And from Skelton's *Why come ye not to Court?* we learn that Mahomet, who is only mentioned and sworn by in the three existing MSS. of Playes of Miracles, formerly figured in some of them *in propriâ personâ:*—

'His servauntes menyal
'He dothe revile and brall,
'Like Mahound in a play.'

Shakespeare, in a well-known passage (*Hamlet*, act iii. sc. 2), couples Termagant and Herod, and Skelton also notices the former.

power and person, declaring 'if the fiend were my foe I should him fell.' He is informed by a messenger of the journey of the three kings (named Melchior, King of Tarsus, Balchesor, King of Saba, and Jaspar, King of Araby) through his territory, and is astonished to hear that there are other kings in the world besides himself:—

'King! what the devyll, other then I?
'We, fy on devylls, fy, fy!'

He sends for them, and they arrive on horseback. When they reach Bethlem, the direction is, 'Here* lyghts the Kyngs of thare horses.' Having paid their adoration, they are warned by an Angel not to return through the dominions of Herod. In the next play the flight into Egypt takes place, and, on commencing the journey, Joseph wishes the audience good day:—

'God bless you more and myn*,
'And have you now all good day.'

The journey and oblation of the three Kings of the East form two Pageants in the Chester series, the eighth and the ninth. In the first they enter on horseback, and after minstrels have played, they are brought before Herod, who thus addresses them regarding the extent of his authority:—

Chester Plays.

'I welde this worlde withouten wene,†
'I beate all those unbuxom ‡ bene,
'I drive the devills alby dene§
'Deepe in hell a downe.

* Less. † *Wene* for *were*, 'dispute,' for the sake of the rhime.
‡ Disobedient. § Subservient.



'For I ame kinge of all mankiude
'I byd, I beate, I lose, I bynde,
'I master the moone; take this in mynde,
'That I ame most of mighte.

'I ame the greatest above degree,
'That is, that was, or ever shalbe:
'The sonne it dare not shine on me,
'And I byd him goe downe.

'No raine to fall shall now be free,
'Nor no lorde have that liberty,
'That dare abyde and I byd fleey,
'But I shall crake his crowne.'

Herod is provided with a sword which, according to the marginal direction, he 'casts up,' 'casts down,' and 'breaks' in his rage. There is also present, as we find by a note, a boy with a bladder (*Puer et vesicus*, in Harl. MS. 2124), but what he does with it does not appear*. The 'oblation' contains nothing deserving particular remark.

The seventeenth Pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ* seems wanting: it probably consisted of the journey of the three Kings, because in the eighteenth play they perform their oblation. Here also, as in the Widkirk and Chester collections, Herod

Coventry Plays.

* 'Boy and pig' is the marginal direction in Harl. MS. 2013, most likely meaning pig's bladder. A pig's bladder at the end of a stick, with peas in it, was formerly part of the caparisons of a fool or jester. In Rabelais, book iii. c. 42, edit. 1553, Panurge, among other things, gives to Triboulet *une vessie de porc, bien enflée et resonnente à cause des poys qui dedens estoient*. With this instrument he was accustomed to buffet all who came in his way. It is possible that the boy with the bladder was employed to buffet Herod, and thus to increase his rage for the amusement of the spectators.

makes his appearance, with a speech of similar import to that already quoted, but singular for its laborious alliteration:—

'As a lord in ryalte* in non regyon so ryche,
'And rulere of all remys† I ryde in ryal a ray.
'Ther is no lord of lond in lordship to me lyche‡
'Non losstyere§, non lefsumere‖, ever lestyng is my lay¶:
'Of bewte and of boldnes I bere ever more the belle:
'Of mayn and of myght I master every man.
'I dynge with my dowtynes the devyll downe to helle,
'For bothe of hevyn and of herth I am kynge sertayn.'

He swears as usual 'by Mahownde' and 'Saint Mahownde,' and is attended by a seneschal, trumpeters and minstrels, whom at intervals he orders to 'blow with all your might,' and when he sits down to a banquet, to 'blow a merry fit.'

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

Widkirk Plays.

The chief action of the fifteenth pageant of the Widkirk collection, called *Magnus Herodes*, is the slaughter of the innocents; but it is introduced by some singular matter. A Messenger, in the outset, gives the following enumeration of the kingdoms that own the sway of Herod:—

'Tuskane and Turky, all Inde and Italy,
'Cecyll and Surry drede hym and dowtys,
'And hym lowtys:

* Royalty. † Realms. ‡ Like. § Lustier.
‖ Liefsomer or more desirable. ¶ Everlasting is my law.

'From Paradise to Padwa, to mount Flascon,
'From Egyp to Mantua, unto Kemp towne;
'From Sarceny to Susa, to Grece it abowne;
'Both Normandy and Norwa lowtys to his crowne.
'His renowne
'Can no tong tell: from heven unto hell,
'Of hym can none spell,
'Bot his cosyn Mahowne.'

Herod entering commands silence, on pain that he will cleave all who make a noise 'small as flesh to pot.' He is in a fury when he learns, that the three kings have escaped, and asks his council what they find in 'Vyrgyll, in Homere*, and all other thing, but legende,' as well as in 'poetes taylys,' regarding the birth of Christ. The moment he hears of the prophecy of Isaiah, his rage is renewed, and he swears by 'coks dere bonys,' that his council are 'thefys and dotty pols.' Being at a loss how to act, he again appeals to them for advice, and is so pleased with the recommendation of the slaughter of all male infants, that he promises to make the councillor who gives it Pope:

'If I lyf in land
'Good lyfe, as I hope,
'This dare I the warand
'To make the Pope †.'

* This early mention of Homer is remarkable.

† The word 'Pope' has been carefully erased in the MS., but that circumstance and the rhime show how it stood originally. Among Cromwell's papers in the Chapter-house, Westminster, is an order 'to put out of all service bokes this word *Papa*.' It was also subsequently erased from many other manuscripts.

He instantly dispatches his knights, and they as quickly execute his orders: three children are slain, after a conflict with three mothers, and the knights having reported the execution they have done, Herod promises,

'Now by mighty Mahowne,
'That is good of renowne,
'If I bere this crowne,
'Ye shall have a lady
'Ilkon * to hym layd,
'And wed at his wyll:'

or, if they like it better, a pecuniary reward of one hundred thousand pounds each. The knights, very ungallantly, seem to prefer the latter. Herod ends the piece with a speech in his usual strain, and concluding with these two lines.

'Bot adew to the Devyll,
'I can no more French.'

Yet no part of his address is in that language now, though it perhaps had been so formerly †.

* *Ilkon* is *each one.*

† My friend Mr. Amyot, to whom I am indebted for many valuable and unacknowledged suggestions, remarked upon the line, 'I can no more French,' that it might have been proverbial in English, as 'au bout de son Latin' was in French. I remember no other instance of its use in English, if it were so; and with regard to the French phrase, which is employed by Scarron, in his *Virg. Trav.*, liv. 7, (as Le Roux has pointed out in his *Dict. Comique, &c.*, ii., 77,) it is to be observed, that *Latin* in French, and *Latino* in Italian, were employed for language generally, and '*au bout de son Latin*' did not mean at the end of his Latin, but at the end of his speech, the person to whom it was applied not having another word to say for himself. Herod here seems to mean that he had exhausted his stock of French, the tongue in which he was made to speak.

The title of the Chester play on this subject, is *De Occisione Innocentum*, and in the commence- Chester ment of it, Herod vows vengeance against that Plays. 'mysbegotten marmosett,' Christ. He then sends a messenger into 'Judy' to summon his knights, and 'Sir Grymbald and Sir Launcler' arrive: when charged to kill 'all knaves children' they remonstrate until they receive a fresh, and more imperative command. One of the knights then replies:—

'And I also, without bost,
'Though the Kinge of Scots, and all his host
'Were here, I set not by their best
'To dryve them downe by deene*.'

They proceed to their work, and among others, by accident, kill Herod's own son†. Soon after their return, Herod is taken suddenly ill, dies, and the devil carries him away. The conclusion of the pageant is the return of Mary and Joseph into Judea.

In the Coventry plays relating to the same events, the knights, after having killed all the Coventry male infants, sit down to a banquet with Plays. Herod, and here we have a personification of Death, 'nakyd and of poor aray,' who states that he is 'god's

* This passage is only in Harl. MS. No. 2124.

† This incident is also found in the French *Mistère de la Conception*, &c., Paris, 1486. The nurse exclaims,

'Ha, faulx murdriers, qu'avez vous fait?
'Occis avez villainement
'Le fils d'Herode proprement!'

See also Mr. Markland's note upon this portion of the Chester play in Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 542.

mesangere,' and that he comes to slay Herod: the following is part of his speech:—

'I am sent fro god, Deth is my name:
'All thynge that is on grownd I welde at my wylle,
'Both man and beste and byrdys wylde and tame,
'Whan that I come them to with deth I do them kylle:
'Erbe gres, and tres stronge, take hem all in same,
'Ya, the grete myghty okys with my dent I spylle.'

The introduction of this character is one of the comparatively modern interpolations, and the whole of his speech indicates a considerable improvement in poetical thought and expression. This portion is, probably, not older than the reign of Henry VI. or Edward IV.* While Herod is rejoicing in the slaughter, and swearing 'by Mahound,' and his two knights 'by Sathanas our sire,' Death strikes them, and *Diabolus recipiat eos.* The devil exclaims:—

'All oure! all oure! this catel is myne!
'I shall hem brynge onto my celle:
'I shall hem teche pleys fyne,
'And showe suche myrthe as is in helle' &c.†

* Mr. Sharp (*Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries*, 53) mentions the Mother of Death as one of the characters in the Cappers pageant, but Death himself does not appear in any of the entries. When Mr. Sharpe illustrates the item by reference to Death in the Moral of *Every Man*, he omits to notice that he forms an important character in the pageant before us. He also figures, as will be seen hereafter in one of the MS. Morals formerly in the possession of Dr. Cox Macro, and now in the library of Hudson Gurney, Esq, M.P., which, I apprehend, were written about the same date when the interpolation in the Coventry Miracle-play under review was inserted.

† The piece called 'Childemas Day,' printed in Hawkins' *Origin*

The purification, which in the Widkirk and Chester plays follows the slaughter of the innocents, in the *Ludus Coventriæ* precedes it. In the two former it also includes the dispute between Christ and the Doctors in the temple, which forms a separate pageant (No. 21.) in the Coventry series.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION—THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY, &c.

The seventeenth pageant of the Widkirk collection is the baptism of the Saviour by St. John; and it affords proof that this series of plays was represented subsequent to the Reformation, for a passage, formerly repeated, relating to and enforcing

Widkirk Plays.

of the English Drama, has more marks of antiquity about it, in some respects, than the Coventry pageant on the slaughter of the innocents. It is, perhaps, the very same piece played by the English fathers at Constance, in 1417, mentioned by Warton, Hist. Eng. Poet., ii. 75. It is clearly much older than the date when the copy in the Bodleian Library (MSS., Digby, 133) was made in 1512. The death of Herod is managed as inartificially as in the Chester play, but the Devil does not fly away with him. In *Le Mistère de la Nativite, Passion*, &c. *Joué a Paris*, 1507, the death of Herod is very singularly brought about. Satan and Astaroth are present, but invisible, when Herod, who is paring an apple, receives tidings of the escape of Jesus Christ. Satan tempts him to commit suicide:

'Mechant homme, fiers en ton ventre
'Le cousteau, sant tant endurer' &c.

Herod takes his advice, and after a few blasphemous lines, stabs himself. The devils seize his soul, and Lucifer orders it to be plunged in molten lead: it is added *icy font les diables tempeste.*

the seven Roman Catholic sacraments, is crossed out with red ink, and the number of those sacraments is carefully erased. In the margin, in a handwriting of perhaps the reign of Edward VI., are inserted the words 'corrected and not played.' The lines cancelled are the following:—

'Here I the anoynt also with oyle and creme, in this intent,
'That men may wit where so thay go, this is a worthy sacrament.
'There are othere and no mo, the which thy self to teche was sent,
'And in true tokyn oone of tho, the fyrst, on thee now is spent *.'

* In the twenty-fourth pageant of the Towneley series the following lines, supporting the doctrine of transubstantiation, from the mouth of the Saviour on the cross, are also cancelled for the same reason.

'That ilk veray brede of lyfe,
'Becomys my fleshe in words fyfe:
'Whoso it resaves in syn or stryfe
'Bese dede forever;
'And whoso it takes in rightwys lyfe
'Dy shall he never.'

In the moral of *Every-man*, Five-wits eulogising the priesthood, says,

'God hath to them more power gyven
'Than to any angell that is in heven.
'With five words he may consecrate
'God's body in fleshe and blood to make,
'And handeleth his maker between his handes.'

Taken by itself, this looks like irony, and as if it had been written in the same spirit of reformation as the following lines, from a poem by John Mardeley, addressed to Q. Elizabeth immediately after she came to the throne. It is in the Royal MSS., 17, B. xxxvij.

'Why worship you then a God so feable,
'In whome is neither lyfe nor yet feallinge?
'He is of no power to do good, nor yet evile,

The piece terminates with a sermon against the deadly sins, addressed by St. John to the audience. This brings us, in the Widkirk series, at once to the *Conspiratio Christi*, the proposal on the part of Judas to betray his master.

Neither the Chester, nor the Coventry plays arrive at this event by any means so speedily. In the first we have (No. 12.) *Tentatio Salvatoris* *, including the incident of the woman taken in adultery, and (No. 13.) *De Resurrectione Lazari*. They present nothing deserving particular notice. Chester Plays.

After the baptism of Christ, which fills the whole of the twenty-second play of the Coventry series, a council is held in hell in the twenty-third play, which is opened by 'Sir Sathanas,' who addresses 'the dere wurthy devels of helle;' and it is determined that he shall be employed to tempt the Saviour: when he has taken Christ to the top of the mountain he thus mentions some of the kingdoms of the world, spread beneath them :— Coventry Plays.

'Turne thee now on this side, and se here Lumbardye;
'Of spycery there growyth many an C balys:

'For he fealleth no payne when he is bakynge,
'Neither anye thynge in the priests breakynge,
'Because no spirite of lyfe in hym is inspired;
'For whan he is rayscd he appereth not standing.'

* There is here a remarkable variance between the two copies of these pieces in the British Museum. In the Harl. MS., No. 2124, Satan, foiled in his attempts upon the Saviour, retires, having made what he calls 'his Testament,' and leaving a very substantial, but far from odoriferous legacy among the spectators. This, it will be seen, corresponds nearly with the Coventry pageant on the same subject.

'Archas and Aragon and grett Almonye;
'Parys and Portyngale, and the towne of Galys:
'Powntoys and Paperynge, and also Picardye,
'Erlonde, Scottlonde and the londe of Walys *.'

It will be observed that England is not mentioned, though Ireland, Scotland and Wales are in the enumeration. Satan is greatly mortified at his defeat, and signifies to the audience the state of his mind in a sonorous but not very decorous manner. In the 24th pageant, of the woman taken in adultery, the young man is thus described making his escape *Hic juvenis quidam extra currit, indeploydo*†, *caligis non ligatis, et braccas in manu tenens.* The Scribes are prodigal of the coarsest terms of abuse against the woman. Lazarus dies on the stage in the 25th pageant, and four days elapse after his burial before he is raised by Jesus. The 26th Coventry pageant presents some singular interpolations and additions, which afford internal evidence that they were made about the reign of Henry VI. or Edward IV. Satan opens it by declaring himself

——————— 'lord Lucifer, that out of helle cam,
'Prince of this world, and gret duke of helle.'

* In the French *Mistère de la Passion* the view is much more enlarged, but there France is not included.

'Tous royaulmes de noble arroy
'Desquels je suis seigneur et roy:
'Rome tiens, Grece à moy s'applique,
'Arabe, Tharse, Asye, Af.ique
'Egipte, Calde, Babilonne,
'Tout est à moy, et tout te donne.'

† The word *indeploydo* I cannot explain.

This information is necessary, because he is disguised as a gallant, and he gives a long and minute description of his dress and manners, belonging to the period to which we have alluded. The following is a portion of it.

'By holde the dyvercyte of my dysgysyd varyauns . . . .
'Of fyne cordewan a goodly peyre of long pekyd schon*,
'Hosyn enclosyd of the most costyous cloth of crenseyn †,
'Thus a bey ‡ to a jentylman to make comparycon:
'With two doseyn poyntys of cheverelle, the aglotts § of sylver feyn.
'A shert of feyn Holond, but care not for the payment.
'A stomachere of clere Reynes ||, the best may be bowth ¶ . . . .
'Cadace-wolle **, or flokkys, where it may be sowth ††
'To stuff withal thi dobbelet and make the of proporcyon.
'Two smale legges and a gret body, thow it ryme nowth ‡‡,
'Yet loke that you desyre to an §§ the newe faccon;
'A gowne of thre yerdys, loke you make compason
'Unto all degrees dayly that pass thi estat.
'A purse with outyn mony, a daggere for devoscyon . . .
'With syde lokkys ||||, I schrewe thi here to thi colere hanging downe,

* Shoes. † Crimson. ‡ Qy. Able.
§ Aguillets. || Rennes. ¶ Bought.
** Cadiz-wool. †† Sought.

‡‡ The meaning seems to be 'though it accord not;' *i. e.*, the great body with small legs. §§ *Han* or have.

|||| Side-locks of hair. *Side-locks* continued in fashion during the reign of Henry VII., as appears from the following passage in H. Med-

'To herborwe qweke bestys *, that tekele men onyth †;
'An hey smal bonet, for curyng of the crowne' &c.

This is one of the most curious pictures of a gallant of that day to be found in any writer: as to his manners, any person who wishes to sustain such a character, is advised to deal in 'gret othys and lycherye,' 'bribery,' and to pretend 'he will fight.' He is farther to set the civil and canon law alike at defiance, and to obey neither 'precept nor commandment.' The Devil also takes the opportunity of drawing a companion-portrait of a lady, who if 'money lakke,' is to procure it by 'here privy plesawns.'

'Here colere splayed and furryd with ermyn, calabere ‡ or satan,
'A seyn § to seile lechory to hem that wyll bey ‖;
'And thei that wyll not by it, yet inow shal thei han,
'And telle hem it is for love, she may it not deney' &c.

The whole is, perhaps, the earliest specimen of dramatic satire in our language, and so afraid was the writer that some 'politic pick-lock of the scene'

wall's Interlude of 'Nature,' written before 1490, and printed after Henry VIII. ascended the throne. *Pride* says,

'I love yt well to have *syde here*
'Half a wote [foote] byneth myne ere,
'For ever more I stande infere,
'That myne nek sholde take told.'

* To harbour *quick* or live beasts. † Night.
‡ Calabrian fur. See Strutt's Dress and Habits, vol. ii. p. 219.
§ Sign. ‖ Buy.

would give it personal application, that he makes Satan add:—

'I have browth yow nowe namys, and wyll ye se why?
'For synne is so plesaunt to eche mannys intent;
'Ye shal kalle parde oneste and naterall kende lechory,
'And covetyse wysdam, there tresure is present,
'Wreth manhod, and envye callyd chastement.'

That is to say; 'I have brought forward no names 'and for this reason—that sin is so pleasant to every 'man, that he calls lechery honest and natural kind-'ness, covetousness wisdom, wrath courage,' &c. The rest of this play relates chiefly to a council of the Jews, called to consider the best course for stopping the increase of the followers of Christ: the subsequent stage direction will evince that some attention was paid to propriety, as far as relates to the dresses of the characters.

'Here shal Annas shewyn hym self in his stage, be 'seyn after a Busshopp [Bishop] of the hoold [old] law, 'in a skarlet gowne, and on that a blew tabbard, furryd 'with whyte and a mytere on his hede after the hoold 'lawe: ij Doctorys stondyng by hym in furryd hodys '[hoods], and on [one] beforn hem with his staff of 'astat [state], and eche of hem on here hedys a furryd 'cappe, with a gret knop in the crowne, and on [one] 'stondyng be forn as a Sarasyn, the wich shal be his 'massangere.'

This Sarasyn Messenger is sent to and fro between Annas and Caiphas, who have separate stages or scaffolds: they afterwards descend into 'the mid place'

between the scaffolds, and there we are told 'shal be 'a lytyl oratory with stolys [stools] and cusshonys 'clenly be seyn, lych [like] as it were a cownsel 'hous.' Among those who assist at the council, are two persons named Rewfyn and Lyon, who seem to represent the whole body of Jews, inimical to the Saviour. The council is followed by the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, four citizens and some children spreading garments and flowers before him. It is evident, that in the mean while 'the Council-house' was closed by some contrivance, for after Christ has entered (in the next pageant, No. 27) the dwelling of Simeon the water-bearer, it 'sodeynly uncloses, schow-'ing the bushopps, prestys [priests], and Jewys, sytting 'in here astat, lych as it were a convocacyon.' The mechanical contrivances, necessary for this part of the exhibition, were no doubt of comparatively late invention and introduction.

TREACHERY OF JUDAS—CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

We return now to the *Conspiratio Christi*, No. 18, of the Widkirk plays. Pilate, with his 'burnished brand,' enforces silence, and as Herod had called himself the 'cousin,' he terms himself 'the grandsire of Mahowne.' Pilate converses with Caiphas and Annas on the miracles wrought by Christ, and here the measure of the verse is peculiarly alliterative

Widkirk Plays.

and difficult: for instance, Annas thus speaks of what he has seen Christ perform :—

'Lord, dom and defe in oure present
'Delivers he by downe and dayll:
'What hurtes or harmes they hent,
'Full hastely he makes theym hayll:
'And for sich warks as he is went,
'Of ilk walth may he avayll;
'And unto us he takes no tent,
'But ilk man trowes unto his tayll.'

The reduplication of the same rhime adds to the difficulty, and renders considerable ingenuity necessary. Judas enters, and offers to betray his master, accepting thirty pence as his reward. What becomes of Pilate and Caiphas we are not informed; but we next find Christ eating the Paschal Lamb, in the house of a person called only *Pater Familias.* Christ prophesies that Judas will betray him, and a personification of the Trinity (called *Trinitas*) is introduced, to tell the Saviour that he must descend into hell to release Adam, Eve, the Prophets, &c. What is termed the *Captio Christi* then takes place by Pilate, and some knights whom he calls 'curtes Kaysers of Kainys Kyn,' or 'courteous Cæsars of Cain's kindred.' In the next pageant (No. 19), *Primus* and *Secundus Tortor* carry Christ before Caiphas and Annas, and the former, provoked by the silence of the prisoner, wishes 'the devils durt in his beard,' and threatens to 'thrust out both his een,' to 'put him in the stockkys,' to 'murder him,' and to 'hang him.' By advice of Annas, Christ is sent

before Pilate; and after the *Tortores*, aided by a person named Froward-taunt, have beaten the Saviour, we find him on Pilate's scaffold in the succeeding piece (No. 20), Pilate having first made a speech, avowing himself 'full of sotelty, falshed, gyle, and trechery,' and the friend of all the 'dere darlyngs of Mahowne,' who 'use bak-bytyngs and slanderyngs.' Pilate refuses to sentence Jesus, but while he washes his hands secretly gives orders for his crucifixion. John, the apostle, conveys the tidings to the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, &c.; and at the close of the play, Christ is brought in bearing his cross, and prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem. *Processus Crucis* forms the 21st play; and Pilate, having enjoined the 'harlots, dastards, thefes, and mychers' present to silence, the hands of the Saviour are bound, and the cross elevated: the *Tortores* taunt and insult Christ by pretending that he is a king, and that he is going to ride in a 'just or turnament.' The nailing upon and raising of the cross is a tedious process, and when it is ended, Jesus makes a long address, reproaching his persecutors, and among other things says:—

'All creatures that kynde may kest*,
'Beestys, byrds, all have they rest
'When they ar wo begon;
'Bot gods son, that shuld be best,
'Has not where apon his hede to rest,
'Bot on his shulder bone.'

Alluding pathetically and picturesquely to the man-

* Cast.

ner in which his head, after the fatigue and pain he had endured, rested on one shoulder.

The *Tortores* 'draw cuts' for Christ's garment, and after he is dead, Longius, 'a blind knight,' is led in: he thrusts a spear into the Saviour's side, and some of the blood flowing upon his eyes, his sight is restored. In the end, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take down the body from the cross.

Besides the undertaking to betray Christ by Judas, the fourteenth play of the Chester collection includes the forgiveness of Mary Magdalen, and the driving of the money changers out of the temple. The fifteenth play is *De cœnâ Domini:* Judas points out his master, and a knight, named Malchus, seizing the Saviour, Peter cuts off the assailant's ear, which Christ, by touching, restores to its place. In the sixteenth play, Jesus is carried before Herod, who thus addresses him: Chester Plays.

'A, welcome, Jesus, verament,
'And I thanke Pilate of this present;
'For ofte tymes I have bene in that intente
'After thee to have sente.

'Jesu, moch have I harde of thee;
'Some vertue fayne now woulde I see:
'Yf thou from god in majesty
'Be comen, tell us here.
'I pray thee saye now to me,
'And prove some of thy postee,
'And moche the gladder woulde I bee
'Truely all this yeare.'

Herod swears furiously because *Jesus nihil respondebit,*

and dispatches him to Pilate, who asks Christ 'what is sothnes?' [truth] to which the Saviour replies, 'Sothnes came from godes see.' He is then handed over to the Jews, who, while insulting and torturing him, use what were subsequently often called Skeltonic verses*.

The close of the following quotation is very singular, considering where the scene of the play is supposed to be laid:—

'*Tertius Judeus.* Now he is bounden,
'Be he never soe wounden,
'Soone he shalbe fonden
'With flapes in feare.
'*Quartus Judeus.* In wo he was wonden,
'And his grave is gronden:
'No lad unto London
'Such law cane hym lere†.'

To this succeeds the denial of Christ by St. Peter, and the piece closes with the crucifixion, presenting nothing novel.

The twenty-seventh pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ* opens with Christ's prophecy regarding Jerusalem; it proceeds to the interview with Mary Magdalen, the Lord's Supper, and the betraying of Christ. The Devil, aside and unseen, rejoices in the calamity likely to befal the Saviour. Jesus in the next piece (No. 28) ascends Mount Olivet, and when he arrives 'in a place lych to a park, he byddys his

Coventry Plays.

* From John Skelton, the poet of the reign of Henry VIII., who wrote much in that measure.

† Teach.

disciples abyde hym.' Jesus subsequently descends to 'the place' or open space between the different scaffolds, and is there taken by 'ten personys weyl be 'seen in white arneys, [harness or armour] and bre-'ganders, and some dysgysed in odyr [other] garments, 'with swerdys [swords] gleyvys [glaives] and other 'straunge wepons, as cressetys with feyr, and lanternys 'and torchis lyth' [light]. After what is marked as the twenty-eighth play of this series, there is a separate leaf, with prayers by two doctors, which seem intended as a sort of prologue*. The twenty-ninth pageant begins with a speech by Herod declaring,

* It may be conjectured, that at least all that follows of this series originally belonged to a different collection of Miracle-plays, not performed at Coventry, but at Durham, and that the conclusion of one set has been attached to the beginning of another. On a blank leaf preceding the twenty-ninth pageant is inscribed, in a comparatively modern hand, 'Ego R. H. Dunelmensis, Possideo: κ κ]ησις αλλα χρησις,' and 'Robert Hegge Dunelmensis' is written at the very commencement of the series. It is to be observed also, that the handwriting is the same throughout the whole volume called, and perhaps miscalled, the *Ludus Coventriæ*. The summaries by the Vexillators, in the outset, do not apply with any degree of exactness to the pageants after No. 28, which are often confusedly numbered. Be this as it may, it is very certain that the pageants from No. 29, inclusive, to the end, wherever they were played, were not represented in the same year as those that preceded them. A new personage in this series, but constantly found in the Chester plays, called *Expositor*, says, in the opening of No. 29,

'Be the love and soferauns of All myghty god
'We entendyn to procede the matere that we lefte the last yere;
'Wherefore we be seche yow, that yow wyllys be good
'To kepe the passyon in your minde that shal be shewyd here.
'The last yere we shewyd,' &c.

Giving a summary of the preceding part of the exhibition.

'To Rylle a thousand Crystyn I gyf not an hawe,
'To se hem hangyn or brent * to me is very plesauns;
'To dryvyn hem in to doongenys †, dragonys to knawe,
'And to rend here flesche and bonys on to here sustenauns.'

He only enters to attract attention, for when he and his knights retire, Jesus is brought before Caiphas and Annas, who send him (in No. 30) to Pilate's scaffold, where he is sitting in what is called the 'Moot-hall.' Pilate refusing to interfere, Jesus is conveyed to Herod, where he is stripped and beaten 'till he is all bloody.' We then come to the subsequent direction: 'Here 'enteryth Satan into the place [meaning again the 'centre surrounded by the stages or scaffolds] in the 'most orryble wyse, and qwyl that he pleyth they shall 'don on Jesus clothis.' Satan's speech commences the thirty-first pageant, in which he calls upon hell to make ready, as Christ would soon visit it. A devil speaking in hell warns Satan, that if Christ invades his regions there will be an end of his power, and Satan begins to think he has gone too far, and acted imprudently, in promoting the death of Christ: he therefore hastens to 'Pilate's wife,' 'the corteyn drawing as she lyth in bedde,' and is supposed to visit her in a dream, from which she starts, and with 'her kyrtyl in here hand,' 'like a mad woman,' she runs to her husband's scaffold, tells him her vision, and warns him not to condemn Jesus. The thirty-second play is occupied with the cruelty and insults of the Jews, and finally

* Burnt. † Dungeons.

with the crucifixion of the Saviour between the two thieves, Pilate, Caiphas, and Annas 'coming down from their scaffolds' to witness what was done.

CASTING THE DICE.

In the Widkirk Collection, we now arrive at a play (No. 22) which seems to have been intended only to excite laughter among the spectators, and is in no way a necessary part of the performance, as the event to which it refers has been before disposed of, viz. the drawing lots for Christ's garment. Pilate begins it with some Latin monkish verses:— Widkirk Plays.

'*Cernite qui statis, quod miræ sum potestatis:*
'*Hoc cognoscatis, vos cedam ni taceatis,*' &c.

He afterwards gives a specimen of his skill, in lines half English, and half Latin.

'Stynt, I say; gyf men place, *quia sum dominus domino-*
'*rum:*
'He that agans me says, *rapietur lux oculorum:*'

and he adds the etymology of his own name, to show that he was of a royal stock, making the Latin the first part of the line, and the English the last:—

'*Stemate reginæ*, Kyng Atus gate me of Pila;'

hence, of course, *Pilatus;* but he tells us also that *nomine vulgari* he was 'Pownce Pilate,' or Pontius Pilate. Having gone through this fatigue, he lies down to sleep, and the two *Tortores*, accompanied by a third, who calls himself Spill-pain, enter for the

purpose of procuring the decision of Pilate, as to who is to have Christ's garment. Pilate, awakened by one of his council, tries in various ways to defraud the *Tortores* of the object of dispute, and when he proposes that they should 'draw cuts,' they suspect that he will overreach them: they produce three dice, thinking that with them they shall be his match, and after much discussion they throw, and Spill-pain wins; but Pilate obtains the garment after all, partly by force, and partly by threats. The *Tortores* then, like unsuccessful gamesters, read a moral lecture on the vice of gambling, of which the following is the sum:

'What commys of dysing,
'I pray you hark after,
'But los of good lakyng, *
'And oft tymes mens slaghter?'

Nothing at all resembling this piece is found in either of the other two manuscript collections of plays.

DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL. THE RESURRECTION.

The descent of Christ into Hell, founded upon the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus (Ch. xvi. xvii. xviii. and xix.) forms one of every known collection of Miracle-plays †, and it was no

Widkirk Plays.

* Good that you are wanting or lacking.

† The oldest MS. of a Miracle-play in English (mentioned in the Introduction) is occupied by this event: it was written as early as the reign of Edward III., and is in the British Museum. (Harl. MS., No.

doubt a favourite subject, on account of the scope it afforded for the display of strong contrasts, and

2253, fol. 55, b.) It is a piece regularly constructed, with a sort of prologue and epilogue. After the prologue, Christ enters, and states his sufferings and design in descending to hell: Satan hears him, and enquires who it is, lest he should 'fonden hou we pleyen here.' The Saviour declares himself, and Satan argues with him on the injustice of depriving him of what he has acquired, observing;

'Whoso buyth any thing,
'Hit is hys ant his offspryng.'

i. e., 'whosoever buys anything it belongs to him and his offspring.' Christ contends that the apple with which Satan bought Adam was his (Christ's) property, and tells the devil that he must submit, as 'Ambes-aas' has fallen to him; in other words, that Satan has cast the dice, and has only thrown both aces. After much discussion the Saviour arrives at the gates of hell.

'Helle gates y come nou to,
'And y wole that heo * un do.
'Wer ys nou this gateward?
'Me thuncketh he is a coward.'

The 'gateward' or porter of hell, runs away, saying,

'Ich have herd wordes stronge,
'Ne dar y her no lengore stonde:
'Kepe the gates whoso may
'Y lete them stonde ant renne away.'

The Saviour binds Satan in hell till 'that come domesday,' and apparently without any resistance: he is then received by Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, St. John the Baptist, and Moses. Adam says,

'Welcome louerd † god of londe,
'Godes sone ant godes sonde ‡,
'Welcome louerd mote thou be,
'That thou wolt us come and se.'

Each of the other characters makes a speech in turn, and the epilogue warns the audience not to commit any offences that may put them in peril of hell and its pains.

* They. † Lord. ‡ Messenger.

especially for the exhibition of the dismay, and discomfiture of Satan and his attendant demons.

In the Widkirk series, Christ descends, in the 23d pageant, stating the object of his visit: Adam sees the 'gleam' of his coming, and announces it to Eve and the Prophets, who sing for joy—*et cantent omnes Salvator mundi.* Rybald, one of the demons and porter of hell, is in great alarm, and calls out to Belzebub to prepare for resistance. The terror becomes general, and 'Astarot, and Anaball, Berith and Belyall,' together with 'Sir Satan our sire' are summoned, while 'watches are set on the walls.'—Satan threatens to beat out Belzebub's brains for disturbing him. The devils refuse to open the gate, and Christ exclaiming *Attollite portas*, &c. they burst. Satan from below orders his fiends to 'dyng the dastard downe,' and Belzebub replies, 'that is soon said.' Satan ascends from the pit of hell, and Christ tells him that he is come to fetch his own, and that his Father sent him: Satan answers, that he 'knew his Father well by sight,' and reasons with Christ, on the impolicy and injustice of releasing those already damned. Argument failing, he entreats Christ to take him out of hell also, to which the Saviour replies, that he will leave him some company, Cain, Judas, Achitophel, Cato, and some others who had destroyed themselves: he adds that such as obey his laws shall never come to hell, which rejoices Satan, as he congratulates himself that hell will soon be fuller than ever; as he intends to

Widkirk Plays.

walk east and west, in order to seduce mankind from obedience. Christ replies

'Nay, feynde, thou shalbe feste *,
'That thou shall flyt no far. †
'*Satan.* Feste? fy! that were a wykyd treson.
'Bellamy, ‡ thou shalbe smytt.
'*Jhu.* Devill, I commaunde the to go downe
'Into thy sete, where thou shall syt.
'*Satan.* Alas, for doyll § and care!
'I synk into hell pyt.'

Satan probably made his *exit* through a trap door, the part under the stage or scaffold being made to represent the infernal regions. Jesus then frees Adam, Eve, Moses, David, Isaiah, &c., who conclude by singing *Te Deum laudamus.*

The *Descensus Christi ad Inferos*, which forms the seventeenth play of the series performed at Chester, is conducted in a very similar manner, excepting that Satan, addressing his 'hell-houndes,' gives them information of the intended visit of Christ; but even he is not aware that he is coming to free Adam, Eve, and the Prophets: Satan boasts of the manner in which he had excited the Jews against the Saviour: Chester Plays.

'Against this shrew, that comes here,
'I tempted the folke in fowle mannere:
'Aysell || and gall for his dinnere
'I made them for to dighte.'

The most singular part of this piece is its conclusion,

* Fast. † Farther. ‡ *Bel-ami.* § Dole or grief. || Vinegar.

which is a curious addition, made perhaps at some period when much cheating had been detected among those who kept taverns and ale-houses in Chester: it is perhaps a piece of satire that had a personal allusion, now of course lost. A woman, who had been a 'taverner and tapster' in Chester, addresses 'Sir Sathanas, sergeant of hell,' after his dominions had been emptied: having related how she had cheated her customers, with bad wine and small measures, she declares that she will remain and keep him company. Satan and *Primus* and *Secundus Demon* welcome her, the last saying,

'Welcome, deare darlinge, to endles bale,
'Useinge cardes, dice and cuppes small,
'With many false othes to sell thy ale:
'Now thou shalte have a feaste.'*

The descent of Christ to hell fills only two pages of the *Ludus Coventriæ*, but it is marked as a separate pageant (No. 33). It presents nothing requiring particular notice, and possibly much of it was acted in dumb show. The thirty-fourth pageant contains the incident of the restoration of the sight of 'blind Longius,' which is inserted in the twenty-first play of the Towneley Manuscript.

Coventry Plays.

The *Resurrectio Domini* is treated very similarly in the three sets of Miracle-plays, and they all follow, with tolerable exactness, the account of this event in the New Testament. It occupies the twenty-fourth

* This strange conclusion is only found in Harl. MS. No. 2013, and not in Harl. MS. No. 2124.

play of the Towneley series, the eighteenth play of the Chester collection, and the thirty-fifth play of the *Ludus Coventriæ*. The following is a specimen, in the latter, of the mode in which one of the soldiers, placed to watch the tomb, expresses his terror and dismay, after he awakes and finds the body of the Saviour gone.

'Awake! awake!
'Hillis gin quake,
'And tres ben shake
'Full nere a too *:
'Stonys cleyvd
'Wyttys ben revid †
'Erys ben devid ‡,
'I am servid soo.'

The appearance of Christ to Cleophas, and Luke, and afterwards to St. Paul, and the rest of the apostles, constitutes the chief subject of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth pageant of the Widkirk collection. The unbelief of St. Thomas, and his subsequent conviction, are treated at some length §. The same matters are

* Nearly in two. † Taken away. ‡ Deafened.

§ The unbelief of St. Thomas is the chief subject of the York pageant, forming part of a procession of pageants represented in that city in 1415, and long before that date. It was published by Croft in his *Excerpta Antiqua*, 1797, p. 105. Nearly the whole piece is in the following form of stanza, put into the mouth of St. Thomas, when he is convinced of the truth of the resurrection:—

'My Lord, my god, full well is me:
'A, blod of pryse blyst might thou be.
'Mankind on earth behold and see
'This blessid blod.
'Marcy, Lord, now haske I thee
'With mane and mood.'

It is conducted very scripturally.

included in the latter part of the eighteenth and in the whole of the nineteenth play, as they were represented at Chester. The thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh, and thirty-eighth plays of the Coventry series go into the same subjects, in tedious detail.

THE ASCENSION. ANTICHRIST.

Widkirk Plays. The twenty-seventh Widkirk play is imperfect at the end, but that part which relates to the ascension is complete: the stage direction is, *et sic ascendit, cantantibus Angelis, Ascendo ad patrem meum.* This brings us to the *Judicium* in the Towneley manuscript, but the Chester plays present some curious matter before we arrive at that point. In Chester Plays. the *Ascentio Domini* (No. 20), Christ sings himself:—'*tunc Jesus ascendit et in ascendendo cantet,* God allmighty alone.' There is a chorus of angels, but he again twice sings, and it is marked in the margin, *cantet solus.* The whole of the twenty-first play is devoted to the election of St. Matthew, and the descent of the Holy Ghost; and the twenty-second play is engrossed by prophecies of the judgment to come, and by an explanation by 'the Expositor' of St. Jerome's fifteen signs of the day of judgment.

The twenty-third Chester play is one of the most remarkable in that series, and it has, I believe, no parallel in our language: it is entitled *De adventu Antichristi,* and is thus conducted.—Antichrist com-

mences with some monkish Latin verses; then he assumes almighty power, and after raising two dead men, and dying himself and coming to life again, he gives away to four credulous kings what are called the four kingdoms of the world:

'To thee I gyve Lomberdy,
'And to thee Denmarke and Hongarye,
'And take thou Ponthus and Italy,
'And Rome it shalbe thyne.'

So that the geographical knowledge of the author was neither very extensive nor very accurate. Enoch and Elias arrive to disprove the claim of Antichrist to be the Messiah. Antichrist says of the Saviour:—

'He calles hym selfe Christe and Messi:
'He lyes, for soth, apertly.
'He is the devill you to anoy,
'And for non other hym knowe.'

And, afterwards, he adds,

'This devills lyme*, that comen is,
'That sayth heaven and earth is his,
'Now we be ready, leeve you this
'Against hym for to mote†.'

The four kings consent to listen to the 'proofs of disputation,' and an argument is commenced between Enoch and Elias on one side and Antichrist on the other, in which 'devils limb,' 'harlot,' 'false faitour,' 'felon,' 'thief,' and other terms of the same kind, are bandied between them. At last Enoch and Elias challenge Antichrist to make the dead, whom he had before raised, eat: Elias blesses bread in the name of

* Limb. † To argue.

the Trinity, and, marking it with a cross, requires the dead to taste it, but they turn from it with fear and horror. *Primus Mortuus* says,

'Alas! put that bread out of my sighte;
'To loke one yt I ame not lighte.
'That printe that is upon it pighte,
'That putts me to greate feare.'

This proof is quite convincing to the four kings, and Antichrist, in a fury, draws a sword and kills them, as well as Enoch and Elias. The Archangel Michael arrives, and does the same execution on Antichrist: '*Tunc Michaell occidit Antichristum, et in occidendo* '*clamat Antichristus* Helpe! Helpe! Helpe! Helpe!'

'Helpe, Sathanas and Luciffer,
'Belzabub bold balacheire!
'Ragnell, Ragnell, thou arte my deare!
'Now fare I wounder evill.
'Alas, alas, where is my power?
'Alas, my wittes is in a were!
'Now bodye and soule, bouth in feare,
'And all goeth to the devil.'

Two demons enter, and after some lamentations, that he was thus dead who would have furnished hell with 'many a fat morsell,' they carry him away, and Enoch and Elias rise, '*et auditoribus status suos demonstrabunt.*' The end of the pageant is the departure of Enoch and Elias with Michael to heaven.

Coventry Plays.

The thirty-ninth and fortieth pageants of the *Ludus Coventriæ* refer to the Ascension, the choice of St. Matthew, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Some Jews, who view the

Apostles under the influence of the miraculous gift, imagine they are intoxicated:

'Muste* in here brayn so selyly doth crepe,
'That thei chateryn and chateryn as they jays were.'

The forty-first pageant is in a different hand, and was most likely added some time after the others to the collection. It relates to the assumption of the Virgin, and is not necessarily connected with anything that has gone before.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

The opening of the twenty-eighth play, entitled *Judicium*, is wanting in the Towneley manu- Widkirk script, but it is obvious that but little has Plays. been lost. Four wicked souls, who have heard the last trumpet blown, are rising in dismay, and after they have talked for some time, and cursed their parents and the day they were born, *Primus Angelus cum gladio* separates the good souls from the bad, and Christ descends to pronounce the final doom. This, however, is delayed in order to diversify the performance with a long scene between three Devils, *Primus Demon*, *Secundus Demon*, and *Tutivillus:*

* *Must* is new wine, or wort. Wickliffe, in his translation of the Acts of the Apostles, ii. 13, referring to this event, uses the same word,

'Othir scornyden and seiden, for these men ben full of *must*.'

Our present version gives it thus,

'Others mocking said, these men are full of *new wine*.'

the latter does not enter until the two former have recovered, in a degree, from their alarm at hearing the last trumpet, in consequence of which hell was empty of souls. They turn over their books and find a long list of the wicked :—

' Of wraggers * and wrears †
' A bag full of brefes ;
' Of carpars and cryars
' Of mychers ‡ and thefes ;
' Of lurdans § and lyars
' That no man lefys ‖ ;
' Of flytars ¶, of flyars
' And renderers of reffys** ;
' Of alkyn †† astates,
' That go bi the gatys
' Of poore pride, that god hats,
' Twenty so many.'

To these are added, by the demon whose business it was to make the entries,

——— ' bakbytars,
' And fals quest dytars ‡‡.
' I had no help of wrytars,
' Bot thise two dalles §§.'

Tutivillus |||| then arrives, and he gives this account of himself :—

* Wranglers. † Noisy fellows. ‡ Pilferers.
§ Good for nothing people. ‖ Believes.
¶ Scolds. ** Thief-takers. †† All-kind.
‡‡ False inquest indicters. §§ Daddles, *i. e.* hands.

|||| Mr. Douce, who superintended the reprint of the *Judicium* for Mr. Towneley, when he presented it to the Roxburghe Club, derives the name of this fiend from *Titivilitium*, a word used by Plautus. The

'I was your chefe tollare,
'And sithen courte rollar:
'Now I am master lollar,'

which establishes that the writer was an enemy of Wickliffe's heresy, and probably an ecclesiastic: this part of the performance is therefore not older than the date when this early reformer gave some disturbance to the Catholic church *. *Tutivillus* produces his 'roll of ragman † of the round tabill' of the souls he had secured for hell, including,

more simple etymology seems to be *totus* and *vilis*. We shall find that he forms an important personage in some of the Morals which followed Miracle-plays.

The name afterwards came to mean any person with evil propensities: thus in *Rauf Royster Doyster*, Tom Titivile is spoken of as one of the hero's lawless companions. Skelton, in his *Colin Clout*, abuses wicked priests who 'talke like Titivelles;' and in his *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*, he couples 'Titivyllis' with tumblers, dicers, and dancers. In the interlude of *Thersytes*, 'Tytyfylles,' keep no better company, viz. 'taberers, typlers and taverners.'

* Wickliffe died in 1384, and was in the full tide of his popularity between 1370 and 1380. The stat. 2 Henry IV. c. 15, was passed *contra Lollardos*, but the term Lollard was in use long before, and is found in Chaucer and Gower. Wilkin's *Concilia*, iii., 202, (as Mr. Amyot pointed out to me,) contains a mandate of the Bishop of Worcester, dated 1387, against Lollard preachers, and persons, *nomine seu ritu Lollardorum confœderati*.

† Wynkyn de Worde printed a poem, a fragment of which only has been recovered, called 'Ragmannes Rolle' in the running title, and consisting of a list of good and bad women in alternate stanzas. 'Ragman's Roll' is mentioned by J. Heywood, in his *Pardoner Frere and Neighbour Pratt*, 1533. Mr. Douce says: 'it is used by old 'writers to express any legal instrument, and the etymology has been 'much disputed. Rageman is also a name given to the Devil, and in 'this place it may have that signification.'

'Fals jurars, and usurars
'To symony that clevys,
'Hasardars and dysars,
'Fals deds forgars,
'Slanderars, bakbytars'—

and in the course of his speech he gives a description of a lady whose head-dress is 'horned like a cowe,' a circumstance which serves to fix the date of this part of the production *. It appears, by what falls from another devil, that wicked souls had recently come so thick and fast to the gate of hell, that the porter had had very hard work, and was 'up early and downe late.'

We then come to the judgment pronounced by the Saviour; and after a speech, in the course of which he shows his wounds, he dismisses four good souls to heaven and four 'cursid catyfs of Kaine's kyn' to hell. The good souls sing *Te Deum laudamus* and *explicit Judicium*†: in other words, the pageant ends.

* This horned head-dress was worn about the middle of the fifteenth century, and in Harl. MS. No. 2255, we meet with a poem attributed to Lydgate, and written in the reign of Henry VI., which contains the subsequent stanza.

'Clerkys recorde of gret auctorite
'Hornys were gove to beestys for diffence:
'A thyng contrary to femynyte
'To be maad sturdy of resistence;
'But arche wyves, egre in ther violence,
'Fers as tygre for to make affray,
'Lyst not of pryde ther hornys cast away.'

The poem is particularly directed against female horns.

† This ought probably to be the last of the Widkirk Pageants, as it is of those of Chester and Coventry, but in the manuscript it is followed

De Judicio extremo is the title of the Chester Pageant, No. 24, and it is conducted as follows. After a speech from the Deity, *Papa Salvatus*, *Imperator Salvatus*, *Rex Salvatus* and *Regina Salvata* appear; and they are followed by *Papa damnatus*, *Imperator damnatus*, *Rex damnatus*, *Regina damnata*, *Justiciarius damnatus*, and *Mercator damnatus*: the damned Pope (a remarkable character in a Roman Catholic Miracle-play) is made to say Chester Plays.

——'sylver and symonye
'Made me pope unworthy,
'That burnes me now full witterly;
'For of blysse I am full bare.'

Then occurs the stage direction, that Jesus is to appear *quasi in nube, si fieri potent:* he makes a long address, and his wounds bleed afresh, after which the good are rewarded with bliss, and the bad punished with bale. Demons enter to seize the wicked, and the first demon lays peculiar stress on the guilt of the Pope and of the Judge: to the last he afterwards says;

by two others, the raising of Lazarus, and what is called *Suspensio Judæ*. The first most likely belonged to the series, and having been omitted in the right place, it was inserted at the end. The second is in a different stanza, and certainly by a different hand: it is unfinished, and as far as it goes it is a monologue by Judas, relating the events of his life—how his mother dreamed that she was brought to bed of a lump of sin, and how he was thrown into the sea and cast ashore on the island from which he derived his name: how the Queen of the island found him, and presented him to the King as her own offspring, until she became actually pregnant and produced a son. The leaves containing the rest of the narrative are wanting.

'A, sir Judge, this goeth to righte:
'By Mahounde, moch of mighte,
'You be myne eich wighte,
'Ever to live in woo.'

The Devils *exportabunt eos*, and the four Evangelists conclude the whole of this series of pageants, by impressing upon the audience the truth of their gospels.

In the *Ludus Coventriæ*, the forty-second pageant is appropriated to 'Doomsday,' and it commences by a summons from the archangels, Michael and Gabriel, to all ranks,

Coventry Plays.

'Both pope, prynce, and prysste with crowne,
'Kynge and Caysere and Knyghts kene;'

and according to the stage direction '*omnes resurgentes subtus terram clamant ha a a, ha a a, ha a a!*'

'Ha'a'a! cleve a sundyr, ye clowdys of clay,
'Asundyr ye breke, and lete us pas,
'Now may oure song be wele away,
'That evyr we synned in dedly trespas.'

After they have exclaimed 'Harrow and out,' the Saviour sees the good waiting patiently for admission, and orders St. Peter to let in his 'blyssyd childeryn.' The wicked beg for mercy, and *Primus Diabolus* tells them to expect none. The Saviour then shows how they had neglected all offices of charity, and the devils read the sins of the damned, as they are marked in black upon their foreheads: it is made an offence of the deepest dye, that they had attended neither mass nor matins. This piece is imperfect at the end, and the last words of it are a repetition by the wicked of their exclamation for mercy.

In concluding this analysis, I ought to apologize for its many unavoidable imperfections, as the first experiment to bring into the compass of a few sheets, subjects that occupy three large volumes. I have collated all the extracts with the utmost care.

Subsequent to the printing of the preceding examination of the Widkirk, Chester, and Coventry Miracle-plays, I was informed of the existence of a fourth Manuscript of the Chester series, only very recently discovered, and unknown to all our literary antiquaries. It came into the hands of J. B. Nichols, Esq., F.S.A., from a gentleman of Cheshire, but of its earlier history he knew nothing: he, however, immediately favoured me with the use of it, which was the more desirable, as it differs from both the MSS. in the British Museum, and is considerably older than either. It was transcribed (from what original does not appear) by a person of the name of Edward Gregorie, who subscribing the conclusion, calls himself 'a scholar of Bunbury,' and adds the date of the year when he finished his undertaking, viz., 1591: the most ancient copy hitherto known bears date in 1600. At one period Mr. Nichols' MS. seems to have been in the possession of some member of the Egerton family, the name of 'Joh. Egerton, Esq.' being written at the conclusion of one of the plays.

It more nearly follows Harl. MS. No. 2013, than Harl. MS. No. 2124; but, nevertheless, preserves not

a few of the peculiarities of the latter, and is, in my opinion, a more valuable relic than either, notwithstanding the unfortunate deficiency of the first play and 'the Banes.' As one proof of the variations it contains, and at the same time of their value, I may refer to the eighth play, where the 'boy and pig' are introduced in the stage direction of the Harleian MSS., which I suspected meant that the boy was furnished with a pig's bladder at the end of a stick, with which he repeatedly struck Herod, in order to increase his rage and to excite the laughter of the spectators. In the MS. of 1591, Herod complains of the manner in which the boy troubled him:—

'This boye doth me so greatly anoye
'That I wax dull and pure dry:'

whereas, in both the Harleian MSS, this point is lost by the misreading of the transcribers:—

'This *bost* doth me so greate nye*,' &c.

The quantity of French is the same in all three MSS., and I may here notice, what I omitted before to remark, that Pilate opens the eighteenth play with a stanza, still preserved in what I take to be the original language of at least part of the performances: as, like the others, it is a mass of ignorant and almost unintelligible corruption, it is useless to quote it. Upon this subject I may, however, cite from this new

* In the MS. of Mr. Nichols, in the play of *Antichrist*, the important word 'lollards' occurs, as in the *Judicium* of the Towneley MS. Both the Harleian copies read merely *losells*.

authority, the following lines in the fourteenth Pageant,—a prayer that the King of France may not be exposed to treachery:—

'And would god almightie,
'The Kinge of France might so afye
'In this realme and baronye,
'That they were all so treu.'

The 'realm and barony' could be no other than the kingdom of France, from whence the piece was imported, and in rendering which into English, the translator omitted to adapt it to the change of country. The stage directions in the MS. of 1591, are often more full and explanatory than in either of the Harleian MSS. In the twenty-first Play we are told 'Christ must speake in heaven,' and above what he says is written 'Lyttle god;' as if there were two representatives of the Deity, one larger than the other, one for the Father and a smaller for the Son. Most of the local and temporary allusions are preserved in Mr. Nichols' manuscript, particularly the singular speech of the female tavern-keeper at the close of the seventeenth Play in Harl. MS. 2013, when she is left in hell, after Christ has freed Adam, Eve, and the Prophets, because she had cheated her customers by selling them bad wine and in small measures.

THE

DIGBY MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE three Miracle-plays or Pageants, devoted to the Conversion of St. Paul, (preserved among the Digby MSS. in the Bodleian Library,) as far as regards that event, are conducted very scripturally, and in this respect present nothing requiring particular remark. The performances are opened and terminated by *Poeta*, in his own character, who delivers a kind of prologue and epilogue, in the latter of which he beseeches

——— ' yow all of hye and low degree,
' Our sympylnes to hold excusyd, and lycens.'

St. Paul is first introduced on horseback, and after his conversion he enters in a ' dyscypuls wede.'—Two devils are employed, called Belyal and Mercury, and the first seems to have been indulged with the unusual luxury of a chair: the stage direction is, ' Here to ' enter a Dyvel with thunder and fyre, and to avaunce ' hym sylfe, saying as folowyth; and his spech spokyn ' to syt downe in a chayre.'

' *Belyall.* Ho! ho! beholde me, the myghte prince of the parts infernall,
' Next unto Lucyfer I am in magestye;
' By name I am nominate the god Belyall,
' Non of more myghte, nor of more excellencye.

After soliloquizing, he complains that he has of late heard 'no news truly,'

'Wherfor I long tyll I speke wyth my messanger Mercurye.'

After which the stage direction is, 'Here shall entere 'a nother devyll, callyd Mercury, with a fyeryng, 'comyng in hast, cryeng and rorying.' He informs Belyal of the conversion of St. Paul, and expresses his conviction, that in consequence 'the devyl's law' will be 'clene downe layd,' which tidings put Belyal also into the utmost dismay. After concerting to stir up the Jewish Bishops, as a last resource, they both 'vanyshe away, with a fyrye flame and a tempest.'

In this performance we hear of the employment of thunder, which must have been imitated by some artificial contrivance. The hand-writing of this MS. is at least as old as the reign of Henry VII.

The Miracle-play called *Oreginale de sca Maria Magdalena*, cannot perhaps be assigned to an earlier date, and it is on many accounts a singular production. It is clear, from its construction, that four stages or scaffolds must have been used for the representation, as the Emperor Tiberius, Herod, Pilate and the Devil have all their separate stations, and under that of the Devil, was a contrivance for the infernal regions: 'here shal entyr the prynce of devylls in a stage, and helle ondyr neth that stage.' Mary Magdalen resides in a castle bequeathed to her by her father, who figures in the earlier part of the performance, and is called King Cyrus. A ship, belonging to St. Peter, is brought into 'the place,' or intermediate space

between the scaffolds, and some of the characters, including the heroine, make a voyage in it, and are supposed to sail a great distance. '*Et tunc venit navis in placeam,*' and the master mariner says;

'Loke forth, Grolbe, my knave,
'And yf yow aspye ony land,
'And tell me what tydyngs yow have.
'*Boy.* Into the shrowds I wol me hye;
'And as I ondyrstand,
'Be my fythe, a castyl I aspye.'

This is in fact the castle of Mary Magdalen. The ship is a novel and curious addition to the stage properties at that time. The castle of Mary Magdalen is besieged by the Devil, aided by the Seven Deadly Sins, and they are successful in their attack upon it. Lechery thus addresses her:—

'Heyl, lady, most lawdabyll of alyauns!
'Heyl, orient as the sonne in his reflexite!
'Myche pepul be comfortyd be your benygnaut affyauns:
'Bryter than the bornyd is your bemys of bewte:
'Moste debonarius with your aungelly velyeyte.'

Luxuria takes Mary to a tavern; and the Taverner thus introduces himself:—

'I am a taverner, wytty and wyse,
'That wynys have to sell gret plente.
'Of all the taverners I bere the pryse,
'That be dwellyng withinne the cete.
'Of wynys I have grete plente,
'Both whyte wyne and red that [is] so clere,
'Here ys wyne of mawt, and malmeseyn,
'Clary wyne and claret and other moo:
'Wyn of gyldyr, and of galls, that made at the grome,

'Wyn of wyan, and unage I seye also:
'Ther be no better as ferre as ye can goo.'

A gallant named 'Curiosity' meets with Mary at the tavern, treats her to 'sops and wine,' and seduces her. His address, on first coming in, is the following:—

'Hof, hof, hof! * a frysh new galaunt:
'Ware of thryft, lay that adoune.
'What wene ye, syrrys, that I were a merchant,
'Be cause I am new com to town.
'With praty tappysterys wold I fayne rownd,
'I have a shert of Reynns with slevys peneaunt;
'A lase of sylke for my lady constaunt.'

Lazarus, who is also represented as the son of Cyrus, is raised in the course of the piece, and the repentance of the heroine is conducted with due attention to the authority of the Holy Writ. Tiberius Cæsar and Herod both make long speeches upon their power and excellencies; and the former, who is called Imperator, says in the commencement of the representation:—

'Tyberyus Sesar, wos power is potencyall,
'I am; the blod ryall most of soverente.
'Of all emperours and kyngs my byrth is the best,
'And all regeons obey my myty volunte.'

* In *Histriomastix* (printed in 1610) Posthaste, the poet of a travelling company of actors, writes a play on the story of the *Prodigal Child*, who enters with these lines:—

'Huffa, huffa, who callis for me?
'I play the Prodigall Child in jollity.'

Other parts of the piece are introduced, which were perhaps copied from some old religious play not now known.

A parasite, of the name of Serybyl, flatters him on his personal appearance, and Tiberius well pleased observes,

'Now for thyne answere, Belyal, blysse thy face,'

which was probably hideous, by way of contradiction. Herod 'makes his boast' (to use the words of the stage direction) in the same style, and subsequently goes to bed: 'Here the Kyng goth to bed in haste;' but, as it seems, for no other purpose than to make room for fresh actors. There is nothing particularly worthy of remark in the conduct of the Devils, headed by Satan. A mock pagan mass to Mahound is performed about the middle of the play, in gibberish with Latin terminations to the words, and ending with these four lines in English, spoken by a boy:

'Hownds and hoggs in heggs and hells,
'Snakes and todds mot be your bells,
'Ragnal and Roffyn and other in the wavys,
'Graunt yow goe to dye on the galous.'

This benediction, it is to be observed, is invoked upon Herod and all the Pagans, including the priests at the altar. The three Kings of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, are among the *dramatis personæ*, but their parts are not prominent. A priest winds up the performance with the following lines, after the usual exhortation:—

'Now, frends, thus endyt thys matere,
'To blysse bryng you that byn here.
'Now, clerkys, with woycys clere,
'Te deum laudamus lett us syng.'
Explicit oreginale de sca Maria Magdalena.

To the whole the author adds this apology.

'Yff ony thyng amysse be,
'Blame connyng and nat me:
'I desyer the redars to be my frynd,
'Yff there be ony amysse yt to amend.'

That is, to blame not the Poet, but his want of skill or cunning, and to amend whatever is found amiss. There exists no trace of authorship.

To this piece succeeds that on the Slaughter of the Innocents, called *Childermas Day:* which is reprinted by Hawkins, in his *Origin of the English Drama,* under the title of *Candlemas Day:* in several places it bears the date of 1512, and John Parfre is twice mentioned as the 'writer' of it; but he was probably the writer only in the sense of transcriber, and not of author, although it should be noticed that none of the other pieces are similarly marked.

The last production, of a dramatic kind, in this curious volume is an imperfect copy of the Moral-play of *Mind, Will, and Understanding,* which forms the second piece in the Macro MS., which is examined hereafter. They seem to be in the handwriting of the same transcriber in both copies; but, in the Digby MS. the performance only extends to the entrance of the 'Quest of Holborn.' There is no material variation as far as the Digby manuscript extends, the existence of which has not hitherto been known.

PRINTED RELIGIOUS PLAYS.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION, BY JOHN BALE—LIFE AND REPENTANCE OF MARY MAGDALEN—KING DARYUS—HISTORY OF JACOB AND ESAU—ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE—QUEEN HESTER.

WARTON states that 'the fashion of acting Mysteries' (meaning Miracle-plays) appears to have expired with Bale*, who, probably, did not write anything of the kind after the year 1538: when we find, therefore, that Miracle-plays were acted very constantly at Chester until 1577, at Coventry until 1591, at York until late in the sixteenth century, at Newcastle until 1598, at Lancaster, Preston, and 'last of all at Kendall in the beginning of the reign of James I.†,' it can hardly be said that the fashion expired with Bale. That Morals or Moral-plays, (of the introduction of which more will be said in the proper place) had been encroaching upon and superseding them by degrees, from the reign of Henry VI., there can be no doubt, but it was long before they were entirely discontinued‡.

* Hist. Engl. Poet., iii., 362, edit. 8vo.

† Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, fol. 1631, 405: he says that he had seen them acted at Lancaster, Preston, and Kendall, after 1603.

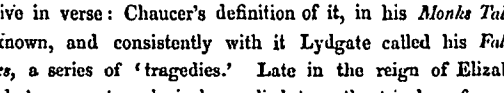
‡ Malone (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 333, a. 8) quotes 'the Beehive of the Romishe Churche,' 1580, to prove a fact not capable of dispute, viz., that 'Mysteries were occasionally represented in the early

I shall now proceed to notice some dramatic pieces which have come down to us in a printed form, and which were obviously intended by their authors as improvements upon the old Miracle-plays.

John Bale * was the first to apply, or rather to misapply the words 'tragedy' and 'comedy' to dramatic representations in English: he calls his *God's Promises* a tragedy, and his *Christ's Temptation* a comedy †.

'part of Queen Elizabeth's reign;' but he was apparently not aware that this work is only a translation from the German, and that it does not at all refer to the performance of Miracle-plays in this country. I have before me the original work, entitled, *Bienkorb der Heilig Romischer Kirchen*, and printed, without the name of the place, in 1576.

* Among the Cotton. MSS. (Cleop. E. iv.) is a letter from Bale to Cromwell, where he calls himself a Doctor of Divinity, and 'late parish priest of Thorndon, in Suffolk.' He complains of persecutions by the Papists, who had instigated Lord Suffolk to throw him into prison. It is without date, and is thus subscribed:



† Before the time of Bale, 'tragedy' was used to signify any serious narrative in verse: Chaucer's definition of it, in his *Monks Tale*, is well known, and consistently with it Lydgate called his *Fall of Princes*, a series of 'tragedies.' Late in the reign of Elizabeth, 'tragedy' was not exclusively applied to a theatrical performance. Churchyard wrote several elegies, which he terms 'tragedies;' and Markham, in 1595, published 'the tragedy of Sir Richard Grenville.' It is a heroic poem, in octave stanzas, and Malone, when he wrote his *Supplement*, (i. p. 78.) was not himself aware that it was not a tragedy, for he enumerates it among plays that had been lost in MS. The same was the case in Italy: in his treatise *Della volgare Eloquenza*, Dante

The proper designation of both unquestionably is Miracle-play, and they differ in no essential respects from previous compositions of the same kind.

Four Miracle-plays, by Bale, are extant:—1. *The three Laws of Nature Moses and Christ;* 2. *God's Promises;* 3. *John the Baptist's preaching in the Wilderness;* 4. *The Temptation of Christ.* Each of these, he states, that he 'compiled *,' not merely because he

says, *per tragediam superiorem stilum induimus;* and in humility he names his 'Inferno' *commedia* (canto xxi), while in his admiration of Virgil he says, that the Eneid is *una tragedia* (canto xx). Boiardo, at a later date, speaks of his romance as a *comedy*, comparing it with Homer's *tragedy* the Iliad. See *Orlando Innamorato*, c. xlvi. st. 8.

* In his account of the writers of Great Britain, (*Scriptor. Illust. M. Brit.* fol. Basil 1557, p. 702,) he gives a list of his own dramatic works. The following, clearly formed a series of the life of Christ:—

1. Of Christ, when he was twelve years old, one comedy.
3. Of his Baptism and Temptation, two comedies.
4. Of Lazarus raised from the dead, one comedy.
5. Of the Councills of the Bishops, one comedy.
6. Of Simon, the Leper, one comedy.
7. Of the Lord's Supper and washing the feet, one comedy.
9. Of the Passion of Christ, two comedies.
11. Of the Sepulture and Resurrection, two comedies.

The miscellaneous dramas contain some very curious titles, and no doubt the pieces themselves, one of which only is extant, corresponded.

12. Upon both marriages of the King. (Henry VIII.)
13. Against Momus and Zoilus.
14. The Treacheries of the Papists.
15. Against the adulterators of God's word.
16. Of King John of England.
17. Of the impostures of Thomas à Beckett.
18. Of the corruptions of the divine Laws.
19. The Imago of Love.

borrowed his materials from the Old and New Testaments, but, perhaps, because he adopted portions of pieces of the same description already existing. The subjects are treated as in the older specimens, and even in point of language and versification, Bale has not much the advantage of his predecessors. His plays were all printed abroad, in 1538, in 4to., and it is to be remarked of them, that they contain the first extant attempts, by means of the stage, to promote the Reformation*. The second and third of Bale's dramatic productions have already been reprinted†; but the fourth is of extreme rarity, and, in connection with the present subject, requires notice‡.

* In *The Vocacyon of Johan Bale* (16mo. n. d. sign. C, 9) the author states, that the three last of his plays enumerated in the text were acted in succession at the Market-cross of Kilkenny, in August, 1553, on the proclamation of Queen Mary, Bale being then Bishop of Ossory; and he adds, that the representation was 'to the small contentation of the prestes and other papistes there,' on account of the tenets enforced. Malone (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii., 31, n. 5) says that '*two* of Bales Mysteries' were then played, but, by his quotation from Bale, he himself shews that *three* were acted. In his *Expostulation or Complaynte* (printed by John Day, n. d.) Bale mentions his Three Lawes of Nature, as having been printed six years before: he adds, in reference to its design and character:—'Therin is it largely declared, 'how that faytheless Antichrist of Rome, with his clergy, hath beno 'a blemyshe, darkener, confounder, and poysoner of all wholsom laws.' I quote from a copy in the library of F. Douce, Esq.

† *John the Baptists preaching in the Wilderness* will be found in vol. i. of the last edition of the Harleian Miscellany: *God's Promises* is reprinted in the old and new editions of Dodsley's Old Plays.

‡ For this purpose I was most readily favoured by Mr. Douce with the use of the unique copy in his library. He is of opinion that it was printed at Zurich.

The *prefatio*, or prologue to *Christ's Temptation* * purports to have been spoken by the author himself, and it connects the 'Temptation' with the previous play of the 'Baptism' of the Saviour. Christ enters hungry in the wilderness, and in his address very appositely undertakes to confute the Catholic doctrine of the efficacy of fasting: Satan joins him in the disguise of a hermit, and the whole temptation is conducted in a very orthodox manner, according to the gospel of St. Luke. Being foiled in the two first attempts, Satan shews Christ all the kingdoms of the world, speaking of them as follows, in a style of rather exuberant description:—

'Lo, how saye ye now? is not here a pleasaunt sight?
'If ye wyll, ye maye here have all the worldes delyght.
'Here is to be seane the kyngedome of Arabye,
'With all the regyons of Affryck, Europe and Asye,
'And their whole delyghtes, their pompe, their magnifycence,
'Their ryches, their honour, their welth, their concupyscence.
'Here is golde and sylver in wonderfull habundaunce,
'Sylkes, velvetes, tyssues, with wynes and spyces of plesaunce:
'Here are fayre women, of countenaunce ameable,
'With all kyndes of meates to the body dylectable:
'Here are camels, stoute horses, and mules that never wyll tyre,
'With so many pleasures as your hart can desyre.'

* The title runs thus:—'A brefe Comedy, or enterlude concernynge 'the temptacyon of our lorde and saver Jesus Christ by Satan in 'the desart. Compyled by Johan Bale. Anno M.D.XXXVIII.' 4to. b. l.

This is, perhaps, the only passage in which Bale shews any marked superiority as a writer of verses to the authors of some of the later additions to the *Ludus Coventriæ*. In the course of his argument Satan makes various attacks upon 'false priests and bishops,' and congratulates himself at last, that 'the Vicar of Rome' will worship him and be his friend. In the *conclusio* or epilogue, Bale in his own person thus maintains the fitness of putting the Scriptures into the hands of the people, and very roundly abuses the Roman Catholics who would still keep them in ignorance.

'What enemyes are they, that from the people wyll have
'The scriptures of God, whych are the myghty weapon
'That Christ left them here their soules from helle to save,
'And throw them headlondes into the devyls domynyon.
'If they be no devyls, I saye there are devyls non.
'They brynge in fastynge, but they leave out *Scriptum est:*
'Chalke they geve for gold, soch fryndes are they to the Beest.'

Besides religious plays connected in subject and acted in succession, which belong to the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, several dramas were written and printed upon separate stories and incidents in the Bible, complete in themselves, and apparently represented without reference to any other pieces which might precede or follow them. One of the most remarkable of these is *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*, which came from the press of John Charlewood, in 1567, and, as the title-page expresses, was 'made by the learned clerk Lewis

Wager*.' It contains no attacks, direct or indirect, upon Catholics or Protestants, and judging from the style, it would seem to have been written after the Reformation had been completed. The following quotation from the prologue proves that it was represented by common itinerant players, and that it had been performed at one of the universities:—

'We, and other persons, have exercised
'This comely and good facultie a long season,
'Which of some have been spitefully despised,
'Wherefore I thinke they can alleage no reason.....

'I marvell why they should detract our facultie:
'We have ridden and gone many sundry waies;
'Yea, we have used this feate at the universitie,
'Yet neither wise nor learned would it dispraise;
'But it hath been perceived ever before our daies,
'That foles love nothing worse than foles to be called:
'A horse will kick if you touch where he is galled†.'

* Its full title is as follows:—'A new Enterlude, never before this 'tyme imprinted, entreating of the Life and Repentaunce of Marie 'Magdalene: not onely godlie, learned and fruitefull, but also well 'furnished with pleasaunt myrth and pastyme, very delectable for 'those which shall heare or reade the same. Made by the learned 'clarke Lewes Wager. The names of the Players [fourteen in num-'ber, at the end of which we read] Foure may easely play this Enter-'lude. Imprinted at London by John Charlewood, dwelling in Bar-'bican, at the signe of the halfe Eagle and the key. Anno. 1567.' Excepting in story, there is no resemblance between this production and the *Oreginale de sca Maria Magdalena*, among the Digby manuscripts in the Bodleian.

† By the two following lines it may be gathered that the contributions of the spectators were voluntary:—

'Truly I say, whether you give halfpence or pence,
'Your gaine shall be double before you part hence.'

This production, and others which will be noticed presently, show that a character which figured much more frequently and importantly in Morals—the Vice—was also sometimes introduced into religious plays of a later date. In *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen* he is called Infidelity, and as the paramour of the heroine he assumes various disguises (aided by Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal-concupiscence), in order to seduce her to every species of guilt. The following dialogue between Mary, Infidelity, Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal-concupiscence, may be taken as an amusing specimen of the lighter parts of performance, of no inconsiderable talent:—

'*Pride.* Let your eies roll in your head, declaring your pride:
'After this sort you must cast your eies aside.
'*Mary.* How thinke you by this maner of countenance?
'*Pride.* Convenient for such as be not of your acquaintance.
'*Cupidity.* I doubt not but she will do right well hir part,
'By that time that we be fast within hir hart.
'*Carnal-conc.* Marke the garments of other in any wise,
'And be you sure of one of the newest guise.
'Your haire, me thynke, is as yellow as any gold;
'Upon your face layd about have it I wold;
'Sometime on your forehead the breadth of an hand:
'Sometime let your attire upon your crowne stand,
'That all your haire for the most part may be in sight.
'To many a man a fayre haire is a great delight.
'*Infidelity.* In sommer time now and then to kepe away flies,
'Let some of that faire haire hang in your eies.

'With a hotte nedle you shall learne it to crispe,
'That it may curle together in maner like a wispe.
'*Mary.* By my treuth, you are a merrie gentleman:
'I will follow your counsell as much as I can.'

They go on to advise her to ornament her hair 'with pretie tusks and toyes,' and if it begin to change colour, to get a dye of some goldsmith to restore it: if her cheek should fade, they tell her to repair to a painter, who will make her still appear 'with a lusty courage.' The Law, Faith, Repentance, Knowledge-of-sin, Justification, and Love, are also personified in the drama, and co-operate with the Saviour and Simon the leper. The last half of the piece (which fills sixty closely-printed pages) is occupied with the reclaiming and conversion of the Magdalen, after she has reached the climax of vice, and after Infidelity has advised her with success 'not to make two hells instead of one,' but to live merrily in this world, since she is sure of being damned hereafter. Christ expels the seven devils, who 'roar terribly,' and Infidelity and his associates abandon all farther efforts. After a dinner in the house of Simon, the Saviour declares:—

'Woman, I say, thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace.
'Now art thou pacified in thy conscience.
'Through thy faithe I doe all thy sinnes releace,
'Assuring thee to have mercy for thy negligence.'

The performance is concluded by a short dialogue between Mary, Justification, and Love; the two last triumphing in the salvation of a sinner.

In point of date, when it issued from the press, an-

other religious play, in which also a Vice is introduced, should have been mentioned first; but it is exceedingly inferior in construction and language: it is called the interlude of *King Darius**, and it was printed for T. Colwell in 1565 †. The story to which it relates is found in the third book of Esdras, chap. iii. and iv., not usually included even in the Apocrypha of our Bible. A question is proposed by Darius, 'What is strongest?' *Stipator Primus* answers, 'Wine;' *Stipator Secundus*, 'the King;' and Zorobabell, 'Women;' each making a speech in support of his opinion. This discussion constitutes the whole action (if it can be so called) of the scriptural part of the play; and of the language, the subsequent quotation from the speech of Zorobabell, bad as it is, is a favourable specimen.

'Swyfte is the course of the Sunne,
'The moone, the starres also,
'Whych in the day theyr course do runne,
'Wyth planets other mo.
'He fetcheth his course rounde aboute
'The compas of one day,
'The starres, the moone, and eke the night,
'Theyr compasse do not staye.

* In various passages popery is strongly reviled, and the prayer at the close mentions Queen Elizabeth by name.

† The following is its title: 'A Pretie new Enterlude, both pithie 'and pleasaunt, of the Story of Kyng Daryus, Beinge taken out of the 'third and fourth Chapter of the thyrd booke of Esdras. The names 'of the Players [twenty in number, at the end of which we read] Syxe 'persons may easely play it. Imprynted at London in Flete-streat, 'beneath the Conduite, at the sygne of S. John Evangelist, by Thomas 'Colwell. Anno Domini M.D.LXV. In October.'

'He then is very excelente,
'That causeth thys to be done,
'Whych sytteth above the Fyrmament
'Wythin hys holy throne.'

The comic portion of the piece is merely introductory of, though unconnected with, the rest. 'Iniquity, the Vice,' with his wooden dagger, is there an important personage, and opens the performance :—

'How now, my maisters: how goeth the world now?
'I came gladly to talke with you.'

Afterwards, assisted by Importunity and Partiality, he has various verbal and personal contests with Equity, Charity, and Constancy: at first, Iniquity and his friends are triumphant; but at last his three opponents catch the Vice alone, and the following occurs.

'*Constancy.* Go gyt thee awaye and make no more a do,
'For if you wyll not, I will compell you.
'*Charytie.* You do well: God's blessynge on your harte,
'We wyll surely put hym to smarte.
'*Equytie.* That is ryght and juste for to do,
'In the whych dede I consent to you.
[*Here sombody must cast fyre to Iniquytie.*
'*Constancye.* For thy wyckednes thou shalte have thys,
'As thou hast deserved for thy doinges, ywysse.
'Gyt thee away, and tary not here.
'*Iniquytie.* Nay, I go to the devil, I feare. [*and goeth out.*
'*Constancie.* Praysed be God,
'That wyth his rod,
'Whych is upryght,
'Hath thys man dystroyed,
'And clene abhorred,
'In his malyce and spyte.'

It is to be concluded, that combustibles had been placed about the dress of the Vice, that they might explode for the amusement of the spectators.

The 'new, merry, and witty comedy or interlude' of *Jacob and Esau* presents some farther features of novelty *. It was printed in 1568, but perhaps it was written while Mary was on the throne, as a piece under the same title was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in 1557†. It is a regularly-constructed play, divided into five acts and various scenes, and all the characters are scriptural excepting the following:—Ragau, servant to Esau; Mido, a boy who leads blind Isaac; Hanon and Zethar, two of his neighbours; Abra, a girl who assists Rebecca; and Debora, an old nurse. Here, therefore, we find nothing allegorical; and, as a proof that the author was anxious that unusual decorum should be observed in the representation of this play, it may be mentioned, that he has appended a note to the list of persons, stating that they 'are to be considered to be Hebrews, and so should be apparrelled with attire.'

It is opened by Ragau, servant to the hunter Esau,

* The following is the title: 'A newe mery and wittie Comedie or 'Enterlude, newely imprinted, treating upon the Historie of Jacob and 'Esau, taken out of the xxvij chap. of the first booke of Moses, enti-'tuled Genesis. The partes and names of the Players, who are to be 'consydered to be Hebrews, and so should be apparailed with attire, '[eleven in number]. Imprinted at London by Henrie Bynneman, 'dwelling in Knightrider streate, at the signe of the Mermayde. Anno 'Domini 1568.'

† Warton, H. E. P., iv., 153, note *e*.

who, ' with his horn at his back and his hunting-staff ' in his hand, leadeth three greyhounds, or one, as may ' be gotten.' His master arrives, and they proceed to the chase, while Rebecca urges Jacob to obtain his brother's birthright. In the second act Esau and his man return ravenously hungry, and Jacob refuses to relieve his brother with a mess of ' red rice pottage,' unless he will relinquish his birthright. Esau consents, and is ridiculed by Ragau for his simplicity, while Jacob, Rebecca, and Abra sing a psalm of thanksgiving. The blessing of Jacob takes place in the fourth act, Ragau and Esau having again gone out to hunt in the third. To please Isaac, Rebecca dresses a kid (instead of venison, which Esau had promised) so daintily, that, as she expresses it, ' it shall say, Come, eate me;' and the artifice succeeds. Esau returns, and from his father hears what had passed in his absence, and the conclusion accords very closely with the narrative in Genesis.

Whoever might be the author of this production (for it is anonymous), he has left us a drama in every respect much superior to anything of the kind which preceded it. The plot is regularly constructed with the observance of the unities of time, place, and action; the characters are well discriminated and contrasted, and the versification, for the time, forcible and flowing. Where it could be done, the author has had the good taste to adopt, as nearly as possible, the simple but vigorous language of Scripture; and in order to do so more exactly, it will be observed that in the sub-

sequent brief extract, from what passes between Isaac and Esau after the success of Jacob, he has made 'father' rhyme with 'father,' 'have' with 'have,' and 'servant' with 'servant:'—

'*Esau.* Ah, Jacob! Jacob! that thou hast me thus undone!
'Oh unhappie happe! Oh misfortune! well away,
'That ever I should live to see this wofull day.
'But hast thou one blissing and no mo, my father?
'Let me have also some blessing, good sweete father.
'*Isaac.* Well, nature pricketh me some remorse on thee to have.
'Behold, thy dwelling place the earthe's fatnesse shall have,
'And the dew of heaven, which doune from above shall fall,
'And with dint of sworde thy living get thou shall;
'And to thy brother Jacob thou shalt be servant.
'*Esau.* Oh, to my yonger brother must I be servant?
'Oh, that ever a man should be so oppressed!'

The comic portions of the play do not depend for their humour merely upon their coarseness. In the following instance the wit is rather refined, and it might make a point even in a modern comedy. Blind Isaac is about to go out, and says:—

'Well, come on: let us goe.
'*Mido.* And who shall leade you? I?
'*Rebecca.* No; it is my office, as long as I am by:
'And I woulde all wives, as the worlde this day is,
'Woulde unto their husbandes likewise do their office.
'*Mido.* Why, dame Rebecca, then all wedded men shold be blind.
'*Rebecca.* What, thou foolishe lad! no such thing was in my minde.'

The following song, one of the earliest specimens

of the kind in a religious play, is not without point. It is sung by old Debora, the nurse, while she is making preparations for Isaac's repast. The burden of it is a proverb:—

'It hath bene a proverbe before I was borne,
'Yong doth it pricke that wyll be a thorne*.

'Who will be evill, or who will be good,
'Who geven to truth, or who to falshood,
'Eche bodies youth sheweth a great likelihood;
'For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.

'Who so in youth will no goodnesse embrace,
'But folow pleasure, and not vertue's trace,
'Great mervaile it is if such come to grace;
'For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.

'Suche as in youth will refuse to be tought,
'Or will be slacke to worke as he ought,
'When they come to age, their proofe will be nought;
'For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.

'If a childe have bene given to any vice,
'Except he be guided by such as be wyse,
'He will therof all his lyfe have a spice;
'For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.'

Among the early printed religious plays, a short notice of a performance of the kind, clothed in an English dress by Arthur Golding, ought not to be omitted. It was written by Beza, and performed at Lausanne (whence the address to the reader is dated),

* It is met with, among many other places, in Lily's *Woman in the Moon*. 1597, Act iii. Tellus says:—'But timely, madame, crookes that tree that will be a camocke, *and yong it prickes that will be a thorne*.'

about the year 1550; and Golding, who entitles it *The Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice*, does not appear to have added a single line of his own, merely translating it in such a form that it might be represented in this country: he completed his version, as we are informed on the title-page, in 1575, but it was not published until two years afterwards*. The prologue, which is in couplets, opens thus:—

'God save you every chone, both great and small,
'Of all degrees: right welcom be you all.
'It is now long, at least as seemes me,
'Since here such preace† togither I did see.
'Would God we might, each weeke through all the yeare,
'See such resort in Churches as is here.
'Ye, Gentlemen and Ladies, I ye pray
'Give eare and harken what I have to say.'

After a dialogue between Abraham and Sarah, and a song by them in praise of their Creator, Satan enters 'in the habit of a Monke,' and in a long soliloquy dwells with peculiar satisfaction on the mischief he had done the world in that disguise. He stands aside, while Abraham receives the heavenly command, while a company of shepherds sing in parts, and while Abraham and Isaac take leave of Sarah. Rejoicing in the

* A fac-simile MS. copy of this most rare production, is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire: the title runs thus:—'A Tragedie 'of Abrahams Sacrifice, Written in french by Theodore Beza, and 'translated into English by A. Golding. Finished at Powles Belchamp, 'in Essex, the xj of August, 1575. Gen. 15, Rom. 4. Abraham beleved 'God, and it was imputed to him for righteousnes. Imprinted at 'London by Thomas Vautrouillier, dwelling in the Blacke Friers. 1577.'

† *Preace* is press or crowd.

conviction that Abraham will prove disobedient, the fiend watches also during the whole process of the sacrifice, and speaks aside. In this scene between the father and the son, there is nothing so pathetic or dramatic as what has already been quoted from MS. Miracle-plays. The following is decidedly the best part of it:—

'*Abraham.* Alas, my sonne, God hath commaunded me
'To make an offring unto him of thee;
'To my great greef, to my great greef and pine,
'And endlesse wo.
'*Isaac.* Alas, poor mother mine,
'How many deathes shall my death give to thee!
'But tell me yit, my killer who shall be?
'*Abraham.* Who, my deere son? my God, my God graunt grace,
'That I may dy now present in this place.
'*Isaac.* O, father mine!
'*Abraham.* Alas, no whit that name
'Agrees to me. Yit should we be to blame
'If we obeyd not God.
'*Isaac.* Sir, I am redy.
'*Satan.* Who would have thought he would have bin so stedie?
'*Isaac.* Now then, my father, well I see in deede,
'That I must dye. Lord, help me at my neede!'

Abraham, unable to strike, drops the knife, again summons his resolution, and is at last about to kill his son when the angel enters, and merely tells him to put the knife into its sheath. This, in fact, is the only incident, unless we include the subsequent sacrifice of



a sheep instead of Isaac. 'The conclusion shewes that the piece was publicly acted:

'The lively faith set foorth before our eye
'In Abraham, that holy personage,
'Whose dooings have bin playd upon this stage;
'Lo, maisters, heere the happie recompence
'Which God doth give you for your gentle silence.'

Thus we see that this 'tragedy' is of the simplest possible construction, and it was probably only one of a series by Beza, although Golding translated no others, either upon the events of the Old or of the New Testament.

The 'new interlude' of '*Godly Queene Hester**,' 1561, deserves remark, because the person who may be said to represent the Vice in it is neither more nor less

* The only copy ever seen of this very singular performance is in the library of the Duke of Devonshire: the full title runs as follows:—'A new enterlude, drawen oute of the holy scripture of godly queene 'Hester, veryc necessary, newly made and imprinted, this present 'yere MDLXI.

'Com nere vertuous matrons and women kind,
'Here may ye learne of Hesters duty;
'In all comlines of vertue you shal finde
'How to behave your selves in humilitie.

'The names of the players,

'The Prologue,	Pryde,
'King Assuerus,	Adulation,
'iii gentlemen,	Ambition,
'Aman,	Hardy-dardy,
'Mardocheus,	A Jewe,
'Hester,	Arbona,
'Pursuevant,	Scriba.'

The colophon is this:—'Imprynted at London by Wyllyam Picker-'yngo and Thomas Hacket, and are to be solde at theyre shoppes.'

than a jester called Hardy-dardy, who assumes weakness of intellect for the sake of giving the greater effect to what he utters: he appears also to have been dressed in a fool's coat. This circumstance is of itself important. He offers himself as a servant to Haman (or Aman, as he is called), who says,

'Me seames ye are not fytte.
'*Hardy-dardy.* Ye wene I lacke wytte, it may well be so;
'Ye, a fole, when it doth happe, may somtyme chaunce to stoppe a gappe.
'When wyse men wyll not mell*.
'*Aman.* Fooles largely will bourde, and tell al theyr thought.
'*Hardy-dardy.* And wyse men will not speke one worde till all become to nought.
'*Aman.* Fooles will tell all, and that trobleth sore.
'*Hardy-dardy.* And wyse men will say nought at al, till al be gone and more.
'*Aman.* Fooles to idlenes all wayes be preste †.
'*Hardy-dardy.* And wyse men use such busines, it were better they were at rest.'

Just afterwards Hardy-dardy observes,

'Some wise man must be fayn sumtime to take the paine
'To do on a foole's cote;'

referring to his own appafel: yet he is learned enough to quote Ovid and Valerius Maximus in one of his answers to king Ahasuerus.

'Have ye not rede of Naso Ovide,
'That eloquent Poet;
'Nor Valery, which telles merely
'The proper feates,

* 'When wise men will not meddle.' † Ready.

'How the Smith Perillus, like a tuta vilus *,
'Made a bull of bras.
'He had thought, iwis, to have pleased king Phalaris,
'But yet he did much wurse †.'

The story is treated scripturally, (as the title-page professes that it is 'drawen oute of the holy scripture,') as far as relates to Hester, Mordecai, Ahasuerus, and Haman; but various other characters, some of them allegorical, as Pride, Adulation, and Ambition, are introduced: these three make their 'testament,' bequeathing all their evil qualities to Haman, and they ultimately occasion his destruction. The play has a prologue of two seven-line stanzas, after which King Ahasuerus is discovered 'sitting in a chaire, speaking to his counsell;' and after three courtiers have discussed, at some length, the comparative merits of riches, power, wisdom, virtue, and noble blood, the King sends out a pursuivant to bring before him all the fair maidens of his kingdom, in order that he may marry. He selects Hester, and she makes several long speeches, to prove her wisdom and fitness for the exalted rank she is destined to fill. The following is one of them, when Ahasuerus requires her to shew how a kingdom is to be governed with 'truth, justice, law, and equity.'

* See note to the twenty-eighth Widkirk Miracle-play, *Judicium*. The passage above strongly confirms the etymology there given of *Tutivilus*, the name of a demon.

† A Jew is made to refer to Virgil:—

'The Mantuans thought it a great punishment
'To be proscribed from theyre goodes and lande,
'As reciteth Virgill, that poet eloquente:
'Much more is our payne, ye may understande,' &c.

'Then I wyl be playne, for veritie hath no pere,
'And for a pryncipall of thys my tale,
'And eke his subjectes, both great and smale,
'In honour and wealth: yea all the province,
'So riche and so stronge, that they maye convince
'All their enemyes where so ever they dwell,
'That woulde invade, resiste, or rebell.

'And where goddes servyce and hospitalitie
'Doeth decaye, and almes to the poore all,
'There may be wealth in places two or three,
'But I assure you, the most part in generall
'Neither have meate nor money, nor strength substancial,
'Fytte to do you service when ye have nede;
'Whiche is no good order, me thynkes in very dede.

'Let God alwaye, therfore, have hys parte,
'And the poore fedde by hospitalitie,
'Eche man his measure, be it pynte or quarte,
'And no man to muche, for that is great jeoberdie *,
'A meane to lose all, as I doe feare me;
'For when all is gathered together on a heape,
'It may sone be conveyed, cariage is good cheape.
'Thys I speake with trew hearte and mynde,
'Beseching your grace to take it in good kynde.'

After her elevation to the throne, Hester has 'a chapel royal' to delight her with music, and the members of it are called in and sing to her, as was not unusual with Queen Elizabeth; and although the scene is laid in Assyria, the personal, local, and temporary allusions are numerous. Ambition, in one place, speaks of the danger of a war with Scotland or France, and Hardy-dardy mentions that he gets his wine from the latter. The place of execution,

* Jeopardy, or danger.

at St. Thomas à Watrings, in London, is more than once introduced. The King writes an epistle to his vicegerents in distant parts of his kingdom, and he dates it the 4th December, 'the iii yeare of our raine,' the piece having been printed in the third year of the reign of Elizabeth. The dialogue, when Haman is sent out to be hanged, contains an allusion to the performance of Pageants or Miracle-plays at that date. Ahasuerus is talking with Hardy-dardy, after Haman has been led to execution.

'*Assewerus.* What meane you by this?
'*Hardy-dardy.* I wyll tell you, by gis, my hole intencion.
'I meane my master is the first taster
'Of his owne invencion.
'The gallhouse he made both hye and brode,
'For Mardocheus he them mente,
'And now he is faine him selfe for certaine
'To play the fyrst pagente.'

At the close the King addresses himself to the auditory:—

'My Lordes, by this fygure ye may well se,
'The multitude hurte by the heades necligence,
'If to his pleasure so geven is he,
'That he will no paine take, nor dilligence:
'Who careth not for his cure ofte loseth credence,
'A proverbe of olde sume time in usage:
'Few men that serve but for theyr owne advauntage.'

Hester makes a short speech of a similar kind, and the characters end the piece by a prayer for the 'company' present at the performance.

MORALS,

OR

MORAL-PLAYS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word 'Morality,' applied to a dramatic representation, like the word 'Mystery,' is of comparatively recent introduction into our language. The terms employed by our ancestors, when they wished to designate this species of abstract allegorical performance, as distinguished from plays founded upon scripture history, were 'Moral' and 'Moral-play*;' and

* They are used in the accounts of the Revels at an early date: *Every-man*, printed by Pynson, is said, on the title-page, to be 'a Moral-play;' and Lupton calls his *All for Money*, 1578, 'a Moral.' At a later period, 1590, we meet with 'the pleasant and stately Moral' of *the Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, and in the licence to Hemmings and others, in 1619, Moral is still particularized as a species of entertainment, distinct from tragedy, comedy, history and pastoral. As the generic term *play* was often used to signify any species of dramatic exhibition, so the word *Moral* was sometimes applied in a wider sense than properly belongs to it. In the following passage from Rowley's *When you see me you know me*, 1605, it is used for a Miracle-play. 'King Arthur and his knights of the round 'table, that were buried in armour are alive again, crying St. George 'for England, and mean shortly to conquer Rome: marry, this is 'thought to be but a *Moral*.'

they have reference to the nature of the production itself, in which some ethical precept is enforced and illustrated.

A Moral, or Moral-play, is a drama, the characters of which are allegorical, abstract, or symbolical, and the story of which is intended to convey a lesson for the better conduct of human life. It has been shewn, that abstract impersonations by degrees found their way into Miracle-plays, although in their origin they only dramatised certain scriptural events by the characters historically concerned. The change was designed to give Miracle-plays a degree of attractiveness they would not have possessed, if year after year they had been repeated to the same audiences precisely in the same form. Among the first innovations of this sort were the representatives of *Veritas*, *Justitia*, *Pax*, and *Misericordia* in 'the Parliament of Heaven,' which constitutes part of the eleventh play or pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ*. *Death*, in the same series, was a subsequent improvement, and the *Mother of Death* (mentioned by Mr. Sharp in his 'Dissertation') a still later addition; until at length such characters as *Reufin* and *Lyon* were employed, partaking of greater individuality, though still personifying the feelings and passions which are supposed to have actuated the Jews against our Saviour.

As such characters became more numerous, they interfered, to a certain degree, with the action and progress of the plot: the scriptural characters in some pieces fell into the background, and sank into com-

parative insignificance; and thus in process of time what was originally intended to be a poetical embellishment to a historical drama, became a new species of theatrical exhibition, unconnected with history. This was called a Moral, or Moral-play; and while it consisted of mere allegory and abstraction, unenlivened by mental or personal idiosyncrasy, by varied incident, and by temporary allusion, it must have been a very wearisome, and often unintelligible exhibition, ill calculated for a popular assembly.

If, therefore, this kind of drama were to exist at all, it could not exist long supported only by mere abstractions: accordingly, in the very earliest specimens that have reached the present day, we find efforts made, with more or less success, to render them amusing as well as instructive, by conveying the moral lesson of the piece in a varied and inviting form. It was only, in fact, by abandoning the original plan, that this object could be accomplished. Thus deviations from the first design of Miracle-plays, by the employment of allegory, led to the performance of Moral-plays; and deviations from Moral-plays, by the relinquishment of abstraction for individual character, paved the way, by a natural and easy gradation, for tragedy and comedy, the representations of real life and manners.

Supposing this view of the subject well founded, it is unnecessary to resort to the hypothesis of Warton, that 'Moralities' (as he and others term them) owed their origin to the speaking characters which, in the

reign of Henry VI., and subsequently, addressed monarchs, from temporary scaffolds on their entrance into large towns and cities *. Those characters were historical as well as allegorical †, and yet it is not pretended, that historical personages, unconnected with the events of Scripture, figured upon our stage until more than a century after allegorical abstractions were first employed.

Malone was 'inclined to think' that our first 'Morality' was not older than the time of Edward IV. ‡; but some manuscript productions of this class have recently been discovered, which show that early in the reign of Henry VI. Morals were in a state of considerable advancement. The opinion of Warton, that they reached the highest perfection of which they are capable while Henry VII. was on the throne, is probably not to be disputed, though they subsequently acquired a greater degree of complication, and exhibited more labour and ingenuity in their construction. A company of actors in the reigns of Henry VII. and

* Hist. Engl. Poet. iii. 37. edit. 8vo.

† When Henry VII. on one occasion entered Coventry, he was addressed not only by Righteousness, Temperance, Strength, Prudence, &c., but by Hector, Alexander the Great, Arthur, Charlemaine, St. Edward, Julius Cæsar, and Godfrey of Bollogne. See the pageants at Coventry appended to the *Tailor's and Sheermen's Play*, as printed by Mr. Sharp in 1817, before he undertook his larger work.—Cotton MS. *Julius* B. xii. shews, that when Henry VII. entered Bristol, during one of his progresses, he was addressed from a scaffold by a performer who represented Henry VI.

‡ Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 30.

Henry VIII. in general only consisted of four or five persons, and by doubling some of the parts they were capable of performing the dramatic entertainments then in fashion*. The greater complication of Morals will be illustrated hereafter in the course of an examination of the structure of some of the pieces exhibited.

Independent of allegorical personages, there were two prominent characters in Moral-plays, regarding which it is necessary to speak, as some misunderstanding has existed respecting them. I allude to the Devil and the Vice.

The Devil was no doubt imported into Moral-plays from the old Miracle-plays, where he figured so amusingly, that when a new species of theatrical diversion had been introduced, he could not be dispensed with: accordingly, we find him the leader of the Seven Deadly Sins, in one of the most ancient Moral-plays that have been preserved. He was rendered as hideous as possible by the mask and dress he wore; and from Ulpian Fulwell's *Like will to Like* 1568, (and from

* This was, however, by no means invariably the case, and some of our most ancient Morals would require many actors for their representation: perhaps, in these cases, the common players obtained extraneous assistance, such as was given at Thetford in the reign of Henry VIII., by the members of the Priory. The custom of composing pieces so that one actor might undertake two, or even three, characters, continued until late in the reign of Elizabeth. In the MS. historical play of *Sir Thomas More*, which was probably written about 1590, the actors of Cardinal Wolsey are spoken of as only 'four and a boy.' Henry VIII. was the first of our monarchs who entertained eight performers, but they formed two separate companies, the new and the old players. See Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 69.

other sources of the same kind which need not be particularised) we learn that his exterior was shaggy and hairy, one of the characters there mistaking him for 'a dancing bear.' His 'bottle-nose' and 'evil face' are mentioned both in that piece, and in T. Lupton's *All for Money*, 1578; and that he had a tail, if it required proof, is evident from the circumstance that the Vice asks him for a piece of it to make a fly-flap. His ordinary exclamation on entering was, 'Ho, ho, ho!' and on all occasions he was prone to roaring and crying out, especially when, for the amusement of the spectators, he was provoked to it by castigation at the hands of the Vice. Malone states that 'his constant attendant was the Vice,' as if the Devil never appeared without him, but in *The Disobedient Child*, (n. d. but printed about 1560,) and in one or two other Morals he exhibited alone*.

* The following amusing story, founded upon the dress and appearance of the Devil in ancient theatrical performances, is from *A C mery Tales*, n. d. but printed by John Rastell prior to 1533, when he seems to have quitted business. I quote from the reprint of 1815.

'*Of John Adroyns in the dyvyls apparell. iij.*

'It fortunyd that in a market towne in the counte of Suffolke there 'was a stage-play, in the which play one callyd John adroyns, which 'dwellyd in a nother vyllage ij myle from thens, playde the dyvyll. 'And when the play was done thys John adroyns in the evynyng 'departed fro the sayde market towne to go home to hys owne house, 'because he had there no change of clothyng he went forth in hys 'dyvyll's apparell, whych in the way comyng homeward cam thorow 'a waren of conys, belongyng to a gentylman of the vyllage wher he 'him self dwelt. At whych tyme it fortunyd a preste, a vycar of a 'church therby, with ij or iij other unthryfty felows, had brought with

Regarding the Vice, Mr. Douce is of opinion (with that sagacity and knowledge which distinguish him, and make difference dangerous), that the name was

'them a hors, a hey and a feret, to thentent there to get conys, and 'when the feret was in the yerth, and the hey set over the path way 'where thys John adroyns shuld come, thys prest and hys felows saw 'hym come in the devyls rayment, consideryng that they were in the 'dyvyl's servyce, and stelyng of conys, and supposyng it had ben the 'devyll in dede for fere ran away. Thys John adroyns in the dyvyls 'rayment, and because it was somwhat dark, saw not the hay, but went 'forth in hast and stomblid therat, and fell doun, that with the fal he 'had almost broken his nek. But when he was a lytyll revyvyd, he 'lokyd up and spyed it was a hay to catch conys, and lokyd further 'and saw that they ran away for fere of him, and saw a horse tyed to 'a bush laden with conys whych they had taken, and he toke the horse 'and the haye and lept upon the horse and rode to the gentylmannys 'place that was lorde of the waren, to the entente to have thank for 'takynge suche a pray. And when he came knokyd at the gatys. To 'whome anone one of the gentylmannys servaunts askyd who was 'there, and sodeinly openyd the gate, and as sone as he perceyvyd hym 'in the devyls rayment was sodenly abashyd, and sparryd the dore 'agayn, and went in to hys mayster and sayd and sware to hys 'mayster that the dyvell was at the gate and wolde come in. The 'gentylman heryng hym say so callyd another of his servauntys, and 'bad hym go to the gate to knowe who was there. Thys seconde 'servaunt came to the gate, durst not open it, but askyd wyth lowd 'voyce who was there? thys John Adroyns in the dyvyls aparell 'answeryd with a hye voyce and sayd, Tell thy mayster I must nedys 'speke with hym or I go. Thys second servaunt heryng.....

[*Eight lines of the original are here wanting.*]

'the devyll in dede that is at the gate syttynge upon an horse laden 'with soules, and be lykelyhode he is come for your soule, purpos ye to 'let him have your soule, and if he had your soule I wene he shulde 'be gon: the gentylman than mervaylously abasshed called his chap- 'layne and sayd let a candell be light and gette holy water, and wente

derived from the nature of the character*; and certain it is that he is represented most wicked by design, and never good but by accident. As the Devil now and then appeared without the Vice, so the Vice sometimes appeared without the Devil. Malone tells us that 'the principal employment of the Vice was to belabour the Devil;' but although he was frequently so engaged he had also higher duties. He figured now and then in the religious plays of a later date, and as has been shewn in *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*, 1567, he performed the part of her lover, before her conversion, under the name of Infidelity: in *King Darius*, 1565, he also acted a prominent part, by his own impulses to

'to the gate with as manye servantes as durste go with him, where 'the chaplayne with muche conjuration sayd, In the name of the 'father, sonne, and holy ghost I commande, and charge the in the 'holy name of God to tell me wherefore thou comeste hyther? This 'John Adroynes in the devylls apparell seying them begynne to con-'jure after such maner sayd: Nay feare not me for I am a good 'devyll, I am John Adroynes your neighboure in this towne, and he 'that playde the devyll to day in the playe. I bryng my mayster a 'dosen or two of his owne conyes that were stolen in dede and theyr 'horse and theyr haye, and made them for feare to ronne awaye: 'whanne they harde hym thus speke, by his voyce knewe hym well, and 'opened the gate and lette hym come in. And so all the forsayd feare 'was turned to myrthe and disporte.

'By this tale ye may se that men feare many tymes more than they 'nede, whiche hathe caused men to beleve that sperytes and devyls 'have ben sene in dyvers places, whan it hathe ben nothynge so.'

* Illustrations of Shakespeare, i. 468, where the fanciful etymologies of Hanmer, Warton, and Steevens are considered.

mischief, under the name of Iniquity, without any prompting from the representative of the principle of evil. Such was the general style of the Vice, and as Iniquity he is spoken of by Shakespeare* and Ben Jonson†. The Vice and Iniquity seem, however, sometimes to have been distinct persons‡, and he was not unfrequently called by the name of particular vices: thus, in *Lusty Juventus*, the Vice performs the part of Hypocrisy; in *Common Conditions*, he is called Conditions; in *Like Will to Like*, he is named Nichol New-fangle; in *the Trial of Treasure*, his part is that of Inclination; in *All for Money*, he is called Sin; in *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, Desire; and in *Appius and Virginia*, Haphazard.

Gifford designates the Vice 'the buffoon of the old Mysteries and Moralities§,' as if he had figured in the Miracle-plays represented at Chester, Coventry, York and elsewhere: Malone also, in a passage before alluded to, speaks of him as the 'constant attendant' of the Devil in 'the ancient religious plays.' Theobald in a note on the words 'the formal Vice Iniquity' in *Richard the Third*, asserts that before the period of the Reformation there was hardly an old play without a Devil and a Vice. The fact is that the Vice was

* Richard III. Act iii. Sc. 1.

† Staple of News, second Intermean.

‡ In the play of *Histriomastix*, 1610, we read the following stage-direction establishing this point:—'Enter a roaring Devil with *the Vice* on his back, *Iniquity* in one hand, and *Juventus* in the other.'

§ Ben Jonson's Works, vol. v. p. 9.

wholly unknown in our 'religious plays' which have hitherto gone by the name of Mysteries, and to which Gifford, Malone, and Theobald refer. *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen* and *King Darius*, already mentioned as containing the character of the Vice, were not written until after the reign of Mary. The same remark will apply to the *Interlude of Queen Hester*, 1561, which differs from other religious plays, inasmuch as the Vice there is a court jester and servant, and is named Hardy-dardy*.

With regard to 'Moralities,' it is certainly true, that in the most ancient Moral-plays characters of gross buffoonery and vicious propensities were inserted for the amusement and instruction of the audience: but, although we hear of 'the fool' in Medwall's interlude performed before Henry VIII. in 1516, such a character seems very rarely to have been specifically called 'the Vice' anterior to the Reformation.

* Nash, in his *Strange Newes of the intercepting certaine Letters*, 1592, laughing at the versification of Gabriel Harvey, says, that it reminds him of the style of the Vice, and he subjoins a specimen possibly taken from some old Moral:—'I will not (he says) rob you of 'your due commendation in anything. In this sonnet [*i.e.*, upon R. 'Greene] you have counterfeited the stile of the old Vice in the Morals, 'as right up and down as may be.

'*Letter.* Greene the Conycatcher of this dreame the author,
'For his dainty device deserveth the halter.

'*Vice.* Hey nan, a non Sir—soft, let me make water,
'Whip it to go, Ill kiss my maisters daughter.
'Tum tiddy dum da, falangtedo diddle,
'Sol la me fa sol, conatus in fiddle.'

On the external appearance of the Vice, Mr. Douce has observed, that 'being generally dressed in a fool's habit,' he was gradually and undistinguishably blended with the domestic fool*; and there is every probability that such was the result. Ben Jonson, in his *Devil is an Ass*, alludes to this very circumstance, when he is speaking of the fools of old kept in the houses of the nobility and gentry:—

——————' fifty years agone and six,
' When every great man had his Vice stand by him
' In his long coat, shaking his wooden dagger.'†

The Vice here spoken of was the domestic fool of the nobility about the year 1560, to whom also Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie*, alludes, under the terms 'buffoon or vice in plays.‡' In the second Intermean of his *Staple News*, Ben Jonson tells us that the Vice sometimes wore 'a juggler's jerkin with false skirts;' and though Mr. Douce is unquestionably correct when he states, that the Vice was 'generally dressed in a fool's habit,' he did not by any means constantly wear the parti-coloured habiliments of a fool: he was sometimes required to act a gallant, and now and then to assume the disguise of virtues it suited his purpose to personate. In *the Life and Repentance of Mary Maydalen*, he several times changes his apparel for the sake of deception. In *the Trial of Treasure*, 1567, he was not only provided, as

* Illustrations of Shakespeare, ii. 305.
† Devil is an Ass, Act I. scene 1. ‡ 4to. 1589. p. 69.

was customary, with his wooden dagger, but in order to render him more ridiculous, with a pair of spectacles (no doubt of a preposterous size), which he is desired by one of the characters to put on. The 'long coat' worn by the Vice, according to the preceding quotation from Ben Jonson's *Devil is an Ass*, was doubtless that dress which, Mr. Douce informs us, belonged 'to the idiot or natural fool*,' often of a mischievous and malignant disposition; and it affords another link of connexion, between the Vice and the domestic fool. The same observation may perhaps be made upon the 'false skirts,' mentioned by Ben Jonson in his *Staple of News;* and the 'juggler's jerkin' might be the sort of dress worn by the Vice in the interlude of *Jack Juggler*. The 'flapper' mentioned by Mr. Douce†, as part of the caparisons of the fool, was perhaps that instrument which the Vice in *All for Money*, 1578, wished to form out of the end of the Devil's tail‡. The Vice, like the fool, was sometimes furnished with a dagger of lath, and it was not unusual that it should be gilt.

Just preceding, the mention of the 'juggler's jerkin' by Ben Jonson, as part of the dress of the Vice, is an allusion to the ludicrous mode in which

* Illustrations of Shakespeare, ii. 321. † Ibid. ii. 319.

‡ In this performance, if not in others, he spoke in two voices, for when All-for-Money requires him to make proclamation, the Vice asks,

'Shall I in my mannes voyce, or in my boyes voyce it declare?'

and All-for-Money replies,

'So that it be heard I do not greatly care.'

poetical justice was not unfrequently done to him at the conclusion of a Moral. Tattle observes, 'but there is never a fiend to carry him away;' and in the first Intermean of the same play, Mirth leads us to suppose, that it was a very common termination of the adventures of the Vice, for him to be carried off to hell on the back of the devil: 'he would carry away 'the Vice on his back, quick to hell, in every play 'where he came.' In *The Longer thou livest the more Fool thou art*, and in *Like will to Like*, the Vice is disposed of nearly in this summary manner: in the first, Confusion carries him to the devil, and in the last, Lucifer bears him off to the infernal regions on his shoulders. In *King Darius*, the Vice runs to hell of his own accord, to escape from Constancy, Equity, and Charity. According to Bishop Harsnet, (in a passage cited by Malone*,) the Vice was in the habit of riding and beating the devil, at other times than when he was thus carried against his will to punishment.

It is not necessary to enter at all at large into the manner in which Moral-plays were represented. The temporary scaffolds, pageants, or stages required for Miracle-plays, were used in the dramatic performances which to a certain extent superseded them, and a rude drawing at the end of one of the Macro MS. Morals, written early in the reign of Henry VI., exhibits five scaffolds, and a castle in the centre, with a bed under

* Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 27. It is a quotation from Harsnet's Declaration of Popish Impostures, 1603.

it, as necessary for the performance of the piece*. In another Moral of the same collection, it is obvious that an open space or 'a yard,' as it is called in the manuscript, was required for the due exhibition. In general, however, only one scaffold or stage seems to have been employed, and this was erected, either in the street, or upon a green adjoining a town or village, sometimes in the public halls of boroughs and cities, and sometimes in the dwellings of the nobility.

It will be remarked, that not a few of the Morals or Moral-plays analysed in the following pages, are called 'Interludes,' a term apparently derived from the fact, that they were played in the intervals of banquets and entertainments. The word was in common use in the reign of Edward IV.; but it seems more properly to belong to such pieces as were written by John Heywood in the reign of Henry VIII., and which were designed by the author for performance at court, on occasions of annual or accidental festivity: they almost form a distinct species of dramatic representations without connexion with allegorical abstractions, of which Heywood may be looked upon as the inventor. Morals were, however, applied to this purpose both before and afterwards, and the MS. historical play of *Sir Thomas More*†, written towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, shews exactly the time, form, and manner

* A fac-simile of this sketch is given in Mr. Sharp's 'Dissertation' on the Coventry Miracle-plays.

† Harleian MSS., No. 7368.

of such representations. Sir Thomas More there gives a splendid supper to the Lord Mayor of London, the Aldermen, their wives, &c., and four men players and a boy (who doubtless took the female characters) having heard of the intended banquet, tender their services in order to vary the amusements. Sir Thomas More declares, that it will be 'excellent to have a play before the banquet,' and asks the actors what pieces they can perform? The answer is, 'Divers, 'my Lord: *The Cradle of Securitie, Hit nayle o'th* 'Head, *Impatient Poverty*, the play of *the Four Pees*, 'Dives and Lazarus*, *Lustie Juventus*, and *the Mar-* 'riage of Wit and Wisedome.' Sir Thomas More prefers the last, and the representation of it accordingly commences, as a play within a play, and it is

* *Dives and Lazarus*, and several other Morals and dramatic productions of a different class, are enumerated in a curious passage in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, where a player is made to tell Roberto—'Why, I am as famous for *Delphrygus* and *the King of the* 'Fairies, as ever was any of my time: *The Twelve Labours of Hercules* 'have I terribly thundered on the stage, and played three scenes of the 'Devil in *The Highway to Heaven*. Have ye so? said Roberto, then I 'pray you pardon me. Nay, more (quoth the player), I can serve to 'make a pretty speech, for I was a country author, passing at a 'Moral; for it was I that penned the Moral of *Man's Wit*, the 'Dialogue of Dives, and for seven years space was absolute interpreter 'of the puppets.' Greene meant himself by Roberto, and the player was some individual then known as the author of the two last pieces he mentions: he is just afterwards made to lament that Morals, in 1592, were out of fashion:—'But now my almanack is out of date;

'The people make no estimation
'Of *Morals*, teaching education.'

continued until an accidental interruption occurs. From the reign of Henry VII. to that of James I. it was very customary for players to perform during private festivities, but especially at the marriages of the nobility and gentry.

Many dramatic pieces of the description of which we are now speaking were not printed until long after they were written and acted, and the date when they issued from the press is often no criterion of the time when they came from the pen of the author. Some that are known to have been published are now lost; others yet remain in MS.; and a few that appear to have been popular were, perhaps, never printed and have not survived: in the first class may be mentioned Skelton's *Nigramansir*,* in the second the Macro Morals, to which I have before alluded, and in the third, several of those in the preceding quotation from the play of *Sir Thomas More*. The extreme popularity of *The Cradle of Security* cannot be doubted: it is mentioned in Chettle's comedy of *Patient Grissel*, 1603, in the 'Works' of Taylor the water-poet, 1630 †, and in Willis's *Mount Tabor*, 1639; which Malone quotes to show the nature of such performances, and which is nearly all the information he supplies upon the subject ‡. Of a more curious Moral-play, written

* See Warton, II. E. P., iii. 185, edit. 8vo.

† P. 122, fol., in a Poem called *The Thiefe*.

‡ Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 28. Malone is inaccurate in the extract he furnishes, but which he professes to give *literatim*: he also omits a curious portion of the original. I am indebted to Mr. Phelps

in defence of theatrical exhibitions, and acted about the year 1580, the following account is left by Stephen Gosson in his rare tract, *Playes confuted in five Actions*,

for the loan of a copy of this curious little volume, from which I shall quote the whole that relates to our subject.

'UPON A STAGE-PLAY WHICH I SAW WHEN I WAS A 'CHILD.

'In the city of Gloucester the manner is (as I think it is in other 'like corporations) that when Players of Enterludes come to towne, 'they first attend the Mayor, to enforme him what noble-mans servants 'they are, and so to get licence for their publike playing; and if the 'Mayor like the Actors, or would shew respect to their Lord and Master, 'he appoints them to play their first play before himselfe and the 'Aldermen and Common Counsell of the City; and that is called the 'Mayor's play, where every one that will comes in without money, the 'Mayor giving the players a reward as hee thinks fit, to shew respect 'unto them. At such a play, my father tooke me with him, and 'made mee stand betweene his leggs, as he sate upon one of the 'benches, where wee saw and heard very well. The play was called '(the Cradle of security) wherein was personated a King or some great 'Prince, with his Courtiers of severall kinds, amongst which three 'Ladies were in speciall grace with him, and they, keeping him in 'delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver Counsellors, hearing 'of Sermons, and listening to good counsell, and admonitions, that in 'the end they got him to lye downe in a cradle upon the stage, where 'these three Ladies joyning in a sweet song, rocked him asleepe, that he 'snorted againe, and in the meane time closely conveyed under the 'cloaths where withall he was covered, a vizard like a swines snout 'upon his face, with three wire chaines fastned thereunto, the other 'end whereof being holden severally by those three Ladies, who fall to 'singing againe, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might 'see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing: 'whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another doore at the 'farthest end of the stage, two old men, the one in blew, with a Serjeant 'at Armes his mace on his shoulder, the other in red with a drawn 'sword in his hand, and leaning with the other hand upon the other's

which appeared without date, in the year 1581 or 1582: the title of it was *The Play of Plays.*

'The author of *The Playe of Playes*, spreading out 'his battel to hemme me in, is driven to take so large 'a compasse, that his array is the thinner, and there-'fore the easier to be broken. He tyeth Life and

'shoulder, and so they two went along in a soft pace, round about by 'the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the Cradle, when all 'the Court was in greatest jollity, and then the foremost old man 'with his Mace stroke a fearfull blow upon the Cradle, whereat all 'the Courtiers, with the three Ladies and the vizard, all vanished; 'and the desolate Prince starting up bare faced, and finding him-'selfe thus sent for to judgement, made a lamentable complaint of 'his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This 'Prince did personate in the morall, the wicked of the world; the 'three Ladies, Pride, Covetousnesse, and Luxury; the two old men, the 'end of the world, and the last judgement. This sight tooke such 'impression in me, that when I came towards mans estate, it was as 'fresh in my memory, as if I had seen it newly acted. From whence 'I observe out of mine owne experience, what great care should bee had 'in the education of children, to keepe them from seeing of spectacles 'of ill examples, and hearing of lascivious or scurrilous words; for 'that their young memories are like faire writing tables, wherein if the 'faire sentences or lessons of grace bee written, they may (by God's 'blessing) keepe them from many vicious blots of life, wherewithall 'they may otherwise be tainted: especially considering the generall 'corruption of our nature, whose very memories are apter to receive 'evill then good, and that the well seasoning of the Caske at the first, 'keepes it the better and sweeter ever after: and withall wee may ob-'serve, how farre unlike the Plaies and harmlesse morals of former 'times are to those which have succeeded, many of which (by report 'of others) may bee termed schoolmasters of vice, and provocations to 'corruptions; which our depraved nature is too prone unto; nature 'and grace being contraries.'

'Delight so fast together, that if Delight be restrained, 'Life presently perisheth: there Zeale perceyving 'Delight to be embraced of Life, puttes a snaffle 'in his mouth to keepe him under: Delight being 'bridled, Zeale leadeth Life through a wildernesse 'of lothsomenesse, where Glutte scarreth them all, 'chasing both Zeale and Delight from Life, and with 'the clubbe of amasednesse strikes such a pegge into 'the heade of Life, that he falles downe for dead upon 'the stage.

'Life being thus fainte and overtravailed, destitute 'of his guyde, robbed of Delight, is readie to give up 'the ghost in the same place: then entereth Recrea- 'tion, which with musicke and singing rockes Life 'asleepe to recover his strength.

'By this meanes Tediousnesse is driven from Life, 'and the teinte is drawne out of his heade, which the 'clubbe of amasednes left behinde.

'At last Recreation setteth up the gentleman upon 'his feete, Delight is restored to him againe, and 'such kinde of sportes, for cullices, are brought in to 'nourishe him, as none but Delight must applye to his 'stomache. Then time being made for the benefite 'of Life, and Life being allowed to follow his appetite 'amongst all manner of pastimes, Life chooseth Com- 'medies for his delight, partly because Commedies are 'neither chargable to the beholders purse, nor painful 'to his body; partly because hē may sit out of the 'raine to viewe the same, when mȧny other pastimes 'are hindred by wether. Zeale is no more admitted

'to Life before he be somewhat pinchte in the wast,
'to avoyde extremitie, and being not in the end simply
'called Zeale, but Moderate Zeale: a few conditions
'are prescribed to Comedies; that the matter be
'purged, deformities blazed, sinne rebuked, honest
'mirth intermingled, and fit time for the hearing of
'the same appointed. Moderate Zeale is contented
'to suffer them, who joyneth with Delight to direct
'Life againe, after which he triumphes over Death,
'and is crowned with eternitie.'

This quotation clearly shows the whole course and conduct of the Moral called *The Play of Plays*. Malone for many years believed that a tract by Thomas Lodge, in defence of theatrical amusements*, was

* Only a single copy of it is known, and that is without the title-page, and in 16mo. It is at present, I believe, in the possession of Mr. Harris of Covent Garden Theatre, in whose hands Malone saw it long after he had finished his History of the Stage, so that he could not make use of it. Lodge himself tells us, in his *Alarum for Usurers*, 1584, that his *Defence of Plays* had been forbidden by the public authorities: it consists of three Divisions: 1. The Defence of Poetry; 2. The Defence of Music; 3. The Defence of Plays; and in the last it speaks of Gosson, not merely as a play-maker but as a play-actor. Lodge asserts that Gosson's play of *Catiline's Conspiracy* was not all his own, and from what follows it should seem that Robert Wilson, who was appointed one of the Queen's Players in 1583, had written a short piece, possibly upon the same subject:—'Beleve me, I should 'preferr Wilson's shorte and sweete, if I were a judge, a piece surely 'worthy of prayse, the practise of a good scholler: would the wiser 'would overlooke that, they might perhaps cull some wisdome out of 'a player's toye.' Lodge agrees that plays ought to be forbidden on the Sabbath, and ends thus:—'Lastly, I frendly bid Gosson farewell, 'wyshinge him to temper his penn with more discretion.' This Answer to Gosson's *School of Abuse* must have been printed in 1580.

entitled *The Play of Plays*, and he was not at all aware that it was a dramatic performance, publicly acted at the Theatre in Shoreditch, about the year 1580. It is evident, from what Gosson says, that it was written to counteract his *School of Abuse*, which was published in 1579.

In the succeeding examination of some of the most important and characteristic Morals or Moral-plays in our language I have adverted,

1. To some highly valuable manuscript specimens formerly in the collection of Dr. Cox Macro, and now in that of Hudson Gurney, Esq. M. P., which are much more ancient than any other pieces of the same description yet discovered.

2. To printed Morals, the lesson enforced by which relates to the vices and regeneration of mankind at large.

3. To such as convey instructions for human conduct of a more varied character.

4. To pieces belonging to the class of Morals, but making approaches to the representation of real life and manners.

5. To Interludes chiefly without allegory, and particularly to those of John Heywood.

MANUSCRIPT MORAL-PLAYS

OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VI.

THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE—MIND, WILL AND UNDERSTANDING—MANKIND.

The Castle of Perseverance is one of the oldest Morals in our language, and in some of the accompanying circumstances it resembles a Miracle-play.

From speeches made by two Vexillators, it appears that this sort of proclamation of the intended commencement of the performance was made a week before it actually began, so that the people of the whole neighbourhood had full notice, not only that a play would be acted upon some open space, or 'green,' but of the nature of the piece itself. The following lines are delivered by one of the Vexillators, trumpets having been first blown to attract attention.

'Grace if god will graunte us of his mykyl myth,
'These percell in propyrtes * we spose us to playe,
'This day sevenenyt before you in syth,
'At N on the greue in ryal aray.

* Malone, following Warton (Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 25) has remarked upon the use of the word *properties* in the reign of Henry VIII. (1511), but we here find it employed, and in the same sense of furniture, apparel, &c., a century earlier.

'Ye, haste you thane thedyrward, syrs, hendly and hyth,
'All good neybors ful specyally we you pray,
'And loke that ye be there be tyme, luffely and lyth*,
'For we schul be onward be underne of the day.'

Thus it is evident that the performers went from place to place, N, as in the instance of the *Ludus Coventriæ*, being put in the proclamation for the *nomen* of the town, in or near which the exhibition was to be made†. The performance was to conclude by 'undern of the day,' that is to say, at nine in the morning, so that perhaps, like the *Ludus Coventriæ*, it commenced at six o'clock. It is not necessary to quote any part of the explanation given by the Vexillators of the general construction and moral of the play, as that will be sufficiently detailed as we proceed in our examination of it.

The play opens with speeches from *Mundus*, Belial and *Caro*, enlarging on their several powers and properties, after which *Humanum Genus*, the representative of the whole race of man, enters as just born and naked:

'I was born this nyth in blody ble,‡
'And nakyd I am, as ye may se.'

While speaking, a good and a bad angel take their places on his right and left, and dispute their claim to

* Lovely and light.

† This mark, a sort of ornamented N, is three times repeated in the course of the addresses of the Vexillators, which occupy about 130 lines: in every instance the Vexillator substituted the name of the town, whatever it might be, in which he was speaking.

‡ Colour.

the care of him, *Humanum Genus* being in turn invited to follow each. He decides in favour of the bad angel, and the 'mynstrells pipe up,' to celebrate the success of the infernal messenger. The Bad Angel carries his pupil to *Mundus*, who is talking with his two friends, *Stultitia* and *Voluptas*. When *Voluptas* sees *Humanum Genus* he exclaims:—

'Be Satan, thou art a nobyl knave
'To techyn men fyrst fro goode:
'Lust and lykynge he schal have,
'Lechery schal ben his fode.
'Mets and drynks he schal have trye;
'With a lykynge lady of lofte
'He schal sytyn in sendal* softe,
'To cachen hym to hell crofte†,
'That day that he schal deye.'

Voluptas and *Stultitia* receive orders from *Mundus* to attend upon *Humanum Genus*. *Detractio*, who says that his name is Backbiter, (and whom we have already seen introduced into the fourteenth Coventry play,) is also directed to be one of his followers: *Detractio* tells *Humanum Genus*,

'Bakbytynge and detraction
'Schal goo with the fro town to town . . .
'I am thyne owyn page;'

and he brings him acquainted with *Avaritia*, who carries him to the six other Deadly Sins, saying

* Silk.

† Croft seems to have been a common term for hell. In the Towneley Miracle-play of the *Judicium*, Tutivillus says

——— 'Come to my crofte
'All harlottys,' &c.

'Here I feffe the in myn hevene,
'With gold, and sylver, lyth as levene,
'The dedly synnys all sevene.
'Pryde, Wrathe, and Envye,
'Come forthe the develys chyldren thre!
'Letchery, Slawth and Glotonye,
'To mans flesch ye are fends fre.'

In order to conjure them up, he pronounces a sort of incantation:

'Dryvyth downe over dalys * drye,
'Beth now blythe as any be;
'Over hyll and holtys † ye gon hyge ‡,
'To come to Mankynde and to me.'

Here we meet with rather a severe hit at the clergy, for *Humanum Genus*, welcoming *Invidia*, observes, that 'in abbeys he dwellyth full ofte;' whence we might, perhaps, infer that the writer was not an ecclesiastic. *Luxuria*, a female, soon afterwards becomes the bed-fellow of *Humanum Genus*. The bad and good angels in turn triumph and deplore, and the the latter takes *Confessio* to *Humanum Genus*, who tells him that he is 'come too soon,' that it is not yet Good Friday, and that he has something else to do than to confess his sins. With the assistance of *Pœnitentia*, however, *Confessio* at last succeeds in reclaiming *Humanum Genus*, who asks where he may take up his abode in security? the reply is, that he must dwell in the *Castle of Perseverance*, 'for it is strenger thanne any in Fraunce,' and thither they conduct him. By this time, we are informed by the

* Dales. † Woods. ‡ High.

Bad Angel, that *Humanum Genus* is 'forty wynter olde.' The seven cardinal virtues are his companions in the castle, which is soon besieged by the seven deadly sins, headed by Belial, after he has abused and beaten them for their negligence in allowing *Humanum Genus* to escape:

'With tene * I schal you tey †:
'Harlots, at onys ‡,
'Fro this wonys §,
'Be Belyals bonys,
'Ye schal a beye.‖'

Et verberabit eos super terram, is the stage direction at this point: *Mundus,* on his part, belabours *Avaritia.*. There is at least spirit in the subsequent address of Belial to his followers before they assault the Castle of Perseverance.

'I here trumpys trebelen all of tene:
'The wery world walkyth to werre ¶ . . .
'Sprede my penon up on a prene,
'And stryke we forthe now undyr sterre.
'Schapyth now your sheldys shene
'Yone skallyd ** skouts for to skerre . . .
'Buske †† ye now, boys, belyve,
'For ever I stonde in mekyl stryve
'Whyl Mankynd is in clene lyve.'

Some of the besiegers were on horseback, for *Caro* says of himself,

'Wahanne I syt in my sadyl it is a selkowth syt ‡‡;
'I gape as a Gogmagog whanne I gynne to gase.'

* Sorrow. † Tie. ‡ Once. § Dwelling.
‖ Abide. ¶ War. ** Scalded.
†† Make ready. ‡‡ A seldom known sight.

Humanum Genus, in a state of considerable alarm, calls on 'the Duke that died on rood' to take care of his soul. The deadly sins are defeated, and it appears from their complaint, that they suffered most from the roses flung at them from the walls by Charity, Patience, &c., which struck them hard enough to make them 'blak and blo.'

The assailants, therefore, retire discomfited; and very soon afterwards it appears, that *Humanum Genus* has grown 'hory and colde,' and that his 'bake gynneth to bowe and bende,' at which time *Avaritia* secretly makes his way under the castle walls, and uses artfull persuasions to induce *Humanum Genus* to quit it: he consents at last, and promises to do as *Avaritia* bids him, remarking,

'Certys this ye wel knowe,
'It is good, whan so the wynde blowe,
'A man to have sum what of his owe *,
'What happe so ever be tyde.'

Tunc descendit ad Avaritiam, leaving the castle, to the dismay of the Virtues, while *Largitas* thus addresses the spectators:—

'Now, good men alle, that here be
'Have my systerys excusyd and me,
'Thou † Mankynde fro this castel fle.'

Garçio (a boy), representing the rising generation, demands of old *Humanum Genus*, all he has accumulated with the assistance of *Avaritia*, alleging that *Mundus* had given it to him; after which *Mors* (who

* Own. † Though.

calls himself 'drery Death') and *Anima* make their appearance, the former delivering a long speech on the greatness and universality of his power, and on the forgetfulness of man. *Anima* calls on *Misericordia* for aid, but the Bad Angel, taking *Humanum Genus* on his back, sets off for the infernal regions, ending a speech with

'Have good day, I goo to helle.'

A discussion then takes place in Heaven, *Misericordia*, *Pax*, *Justitia*, and *Veritus* applying to *Deus, sedens in tronum*, who says;

'Welcum in fere,
'Brythere thanne blossum on brere,
'My dowters dere;
'Cum forth and stande ye me nere.'

Misericordia and *Pax* plead in behalf of *Humanum Genus*, and *Veritas* and *Justitia* against him. The Deity sends for the soul of *Humanum Genus*; *Pax* takes it from the Bad Angel, and *Misericordia* thus introduces it:

'Lo, here Mankynd,
'Lyter thanne lef is on lynde*,
'That hath ben pynyd:
'Thy mercy, lord, lete hym fynde.'

* This figure seems to have been almost proverbial. In the Widkirk play of the Shepherds, one of them says,

'As lyght I me feyll,
'As leyfe on a tree:'

and Chaucer in his Envoy to husbands, at the end of his *Clerk of Oxenford's Tale*, names the same tree as is mentioned in this Moral:

'Be aye of chere as light as lefe on *linde*.'

The *linde* is what we now call the *Linden* or *Lime* tree.

We are rather left to infer that *Humanum Genus* is saved, than directly told it. *Pater sedens in judicio* pronounces the sentence, and, in the course of what he says, thus enlarges upon his own power :—

'Kyng, kayser, knyt, and kampyone,
'Pope, patriark, prest, and prelat in pes,
'Duke, dowtyest in dede be dale and be downe,
'Lytyl and mekyl, the more and the les,
'All the stats of the werld is at myne renowne.'

The Bad Angel is of course left in hell; but what becomes of the rest of the persons, and especially of the Seven Deadly Sins, we have no information. It may be remarked as a singularity, that the Deity in person is made to speak the following epilogue, after having concluded an address which relates to the business of the piece.

'All men example here at may take,
'To mayntein the good and mendyn here mys.
'Thus endyth our gamys:
'To save you fro synnynge
'Evyr at the begynnynge,
'Thynke on youre last endynge.
'*Te deum laudamus.*'

This, in fact, is the moral of the play, which, it will be remarked, is a well-constructed and much-varied allegory: although it is certainly as old as the reign of Henry VI., the production is of such a nature as to indicate that it must have had predecessors in the same kind, before it could have arrived at such a degree of perfection. At the close of the performance is a list of the characters, no less than

thirty-six in number (including the two Vexillators); so that the getting of it up must have been expensive, and according to a rude drawing on the last leaf, its representation required the appearance of a castle in the centre, with a bed under it for *Humanum Genus*, and five scaffolds for *Deus, Belial, Mundus, Caro*, and *Avaritia*.

The next Moral, *Mind, Will, and Understanding**, must also have been represented at very considerable cost, for, independent of the rich dresses of the speaking characters, eighteen mutes are introduced, all differently disguised, for the purpose of producing bustle and variety. The construction of the piece is not by any means complicated.

It is opened by Wisdom, who states that he represents the second person of the Trinity: he is dressed in 'a rich purple cloth of gold,' with 'a beard of gold,' a 'cheveler' or perriwig on his head, and 'a 'rich imperial crown thereupon, set with precious 'stones—in his left hand a ball of gold with a cross 'thereupon, and in his right hand a regal sceptre.' He is soon joined by *Anima* 'as a maid, in a white 'cloth of gold, gaily purfled with minever, a mantle 'of black thereupon, a cheveler like to Wisdom, with 'a rich chaplet laced behind, hanging down with two 'knots of gold and side tassels.' By the dialogue

* This is the Moral, a large fragment of which exists among the Digby MSS. (No. 133), in the Bodleian Library. It is there imperfect at the conclusion. It is apparently in the same hand-writing as the complete copy I have used in the ensuing pages.

between them, it appears that they are in love with each other: *Anima* says—

'A, soveren joy, my herts affyance
'The fervoure of my love to you I present,
'That mekyt my herte youre love so fervent,
'Teache me the scolys of your dyvynyte,' &c.

Their conversation upon heavenly love, the seven sacraments, the five senses, sensuality, and reason, is very long. Mind, Will, and Understanding, then describe in detail their various properties; and after Five Wits, attired as five virgins, have gone out singing, some relief to the tedium is afforded by the entrance of Lucifer 'in a devil's array without, and within as a proud gallant;' the meaning of which is, that he has his gallant's dress under his 'devil's array,' for he very soon removes the latter. He begins as usual, 'Out harrow!' &c. and relates the creation and the fall of man, speaking of Mind, Will, and Understanding, as the three properties of the soul of man, which he resolves to assail and corrupt. He accordingly 'devoideth, and cometh in again as a goodly gallant,' and succeeds in alluring Mind, Will, and Understanding to vice. Will declares—

'Ya, I woll no more row a geyn the floode;
'I woll sett my soule a mery pynne:'

and the other two agree with him, Understanding adding,

'We woll be fresche hamp* *la,vlu joly:*
'Farwell penance.'

* It is not easy to guess what word these letters are intended for.

While they have temporarily withdrawn, Lucifer rejoices, and observes:

'Resone I have made both dethe and dumme;
'Grace is out, and put a roine*.

We then come to an incident which seems merely meant to excite laughter. Lucifer, at the end of his speech, says:—

'Verely the soule god ys with in,
'And wen yt ys in dedly synne,
'Yt [is] verely the develys place.
'Thus by colours gyane†
'Many a soule to hell I wynne.
'Wyde to go I may not blyne‡
'With this fals boy, god gyff hym evell grace.
'[*Her he takyt a screwde boy with hym, and goth*
'*hys wey cryenge.*'

Perhaps he snatched up a boy from the crowd, and ran away with him. Mind, Will, and Understanding, return dressed in gay apparel: they bid farewell to Conscience, and Will especially dedicates himself to lust. They then begin singing:

'*Mynde.* I rejoys of thes: now let us synge.
'*Undyrstondyng.* Ande yff I spare, evell joy me wrynge.
'*Wyll.* Have at you I: lo, I have a sprynge;
'Lust makyth me wondyr wylde.
'*Mynde.* A tenour to you both I brynge.

* This word may serve to add another to the many notes on '*Aroint* thee witch,' in Macbeth, Act i. Scene 3. In the MS. 'a' and 'roine' are not joined, as perhaps they ought to be. Nobody pretends to have discovered the etymology of 'aroint;' and as one more conjecture, the French verb *éloigner* (corrupted to *croigner*) may be mentioned.

† Possibly for *gay*. ‡ Cease.

'*Undyrstondyng*. And I a mene for ony kynge.
'*Wyll*. And but a trebult I out wrynge,
'The devell hym spede that myrthe exyled.
'[*Et cantent*.'

The words of their song are not given. Will declares that he is 'as mery as byrd on bow,' and they next determine to have a dance. Mind summons his followers, who are thus described:—'Here enter six 'dysgysyde in the sute of Mynde, with rede berdes, 'and lyons rampant on here crests, and yche a warder 'in his honde.' It is directed that the minstrels shall blow their trumpets, and that each of the six shall answer to his name: they appear to be Indignation, Sturdiness, Malice, Hastiness, Wreck, and Discord. Understanding in turn summons his adherents:—

'The quest of Holborne, cum in your places;
'Ageyn the ryght ever they rechase:
'Of wom they holde not, harde his grace ys,
'Many a tyme have damnyde truthe.'

This mention of the corruptness of the inquest of Holborn was a temporary allusion, not now perhaps to be explained. The direction regarding their entrance is this:—'Here entrethe six jurours in a sute, gownyde 'with hods abowt her heds, hatts of mayntenance 'there up on, vyserde diversly.' Their names are Wrong, Slight, Doubleness, Falseness, Ravin, and Deceit. The servants of Will next arrive—'Here 'entrethe six women, three sut dysgysyde as galonts, 'and three as Matrones, with wondyrfull vysurs correspondent.' They are called Recklesshood, Idleness, Surfeit, Greediness, Spouse-breach, and Fornication.

The minstrels play 'a horne-pype,' and they all dance until they quarrel, when Mynde exclaims in a rage—

'Hurle hens these harlotts, here gyse ys of France!'

and the eighteen mutes being driven off, Mind, Will, and Understanding remain on the stage. Mind says to his two companions—

'Leve then thys dalyance,
'Ande set we ordenance
'Off better chevesaunce*,
'How we may thryve.
'*Undyrstondyng.* At Westmynster with out varyance,
'The nex terme shall me sore avaunce,
'For retornys, for enbraces, for recordaunce,
'Lythlyer to get goode kan no man on lyve.
'*Mynde.* And at the parvyse† I wyll be,
'A'Powlys be twyn two and three,
'With a menye folowynge me.....
'*Wyll.* Ande ever the latter the lever me:
'Wen I com lat to the cyte,
'I walke all lanys and weys to myne affynyte;
'And I spede not ther, to the stews I resort.'

They continue to converse in this strain for some time, Understanding dwelling on the tricks of the law. Just as they are about to make their *exit*, in order to eat and drink together, Wisdom unexpectedly enters; while *Anima*, having been disfigured and corrupted by Mind, Will, and Understanding, 'ap-

* Enterprise.

† *Parvyse* means the Portico. This passage settles the doubt (see Glossary to Tyrwhitt's Chaucer, *voc.* 'Parvis') as to where the Parvis at London was situated. It was where lawyers met for consultation, viz., the portico of St. Paul's Cathedral. *Pour avis* would seem, therefore, a more reasonable etymology than Du Cange's *Paradisus*.

perythe in the most horrybull wyse, fowlere than a fend.' She afterwards gives birth to six of the deadly sins, and the operation is thus described:—'Here 'rennyt out from undyr the horrybull mantyll of the 'Soule, six small boys in the lyknes of devyllys, and so 'retorne ageyn.' *Anima* becomes sensible of her dreadful transformation, and Mind, Will, and Understanding find that they are the cause of it. It is added:—'Here they go out, and in the goynge the Soule 'syngyth in the most lamentabull wyse, with drawte 'notes, as yt ys songyn in the passyon wyke;' in allusion probably to the prolonged manner of drawing out the notes of psalms at that season.

Wisdom makes a long speech, in order to give the characters time to dress themselves; after which, 'here 'entrethe *Anima*, with the five wytts goynge be fore, 'Mynde on the onsyde and Undyrstondynge on the 'other syde, and Wyll folowyng, all in here fyrst 'clothynge, her chappeletts and crests, and all havyng 'on crownys, syngynge in here commynge.' Mind, Will, and Understanding renounce their evil courses, and *Anima* rejoices in the change. The conclusion or epilogue, not assigned to any character, is as follows:—

'*Vobis qui timetis Deum*
'*Orietur sol rusticum.*
'The tru son of ryghtusnes,
'Wyche that ys one lorde Jhu,
'Shall sprynge in hem that drede hys meknes.
'Nowe ye mut evyry soule renewe
'In grace, and vyces to eschew,
'And so to ende with perfection,

'That the doctryne of wysdom we may sew.
'*Sapientia patris* graunt that for hys passyon.
'Amen.'

At the end is a list of the characters, but it does not include Will, nor any of the persons who come in to dance.

The moral enforced by the two preceding pieces is the same as that of the third Moral-play, which I shall call *Mankind*. It is, however, mixed up with the grossest obscenity, and seems calculated for an audience of a lower rank: nevertheless, it appears by the introductory speech of Mercy, that persons of the higher orders sat during the performance, while the rest stood. He says—

'O, ye soverens that sytt, and ye brothern that stonde ryght uppe,
'Pryke not your felycytes on thyngs transytorye' &c.

The piece contains a good deal that is curious, and some characters are introduced that have much individuality about them. It seems that Mercy is dressed like a friar, and being joined by three persons called Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days, they jeer him, and tell him, when he wishes to advise them, that his 'body is full of Englysh Laten.' After a good deal of mere nonsense and absurd buffoonery, they leave Mercy on the stage, and Mankind enters—

'My name is Mankynde: I have my composycyon
'Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye:
'Be twyx the tweyn ys a grett dyvisyon;
'He that shulde be sojecte now he hath the victory.

'Thys ys to me a lementable story,
'To se my flesch of my soull to have governaunce:
'Wher the good wyff ys master, the good man may be sory.'

While Mercy is warning Mankind to eschew vice, New-guise enters with a broken head, which his wife had given him. Nought and Now-a-days also arrive, and Mercy advises Mankind to avoid their company, and to beware of the artifices of the fiend *Tutivillus*, here spelt *Tytivillus*, but the same demon whose name has already frequently occurred.

'Beware of Tytivillus, for he lesyth no way,
'That goth in vysybull and wyll not be sene:
'He wyll ronde * in your ere, and cast a net be for your eyn:
'He ys worst of them all.'

It afterwards appears that he has the power of making himself invisible; and that the net spoken of is not figurative but material, for he is so furnished. It is singular, that after Mercy has withdrawn, Mankind sits down on the stage to write—

'Her wyll I sytt and tytyll in this papyr
'The incomparable astat of my permycyon.
'Worshypfull Soverence, I have wretyn here
'The gloryuse remembrance of my nobyll condycyon.
'To have remos, and memory of mysylff thus wretyn yt ys,
'To defende me from all superstycyus charmys.'

Being provided with a spade, he falls to digging for his subsistence. Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days enter, and having sung a song of mere filth, with

* Whisper.

the burden, 'It is wretyn with a cole,' Mankind drives them off, inflicting divers wounds, some of no very decorous kind. Mischief, who seems to act a part like that of the Vice, recalls them—

'Alac, alac! *venez, venez*, cum hether with sorowe!'

and they return and conjure up *Tutivillus* in a very singular manner.

'*Myscheff.* How, how, a mynstrell! know ye ony ont?
'*Nought.* I kan pype in a Walsyngham wystyll.
'*Myscheff.* Blow a pase, and you shall bryng hym in with a flewte.
'*Tytivillus.* I com, with my leggs under me.'

He sends Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days upon expeditions to commit depredations of all kinds, and when they make their *exit* he gives them his left-handed blessing—

'Goo your wey, a devell wey, go your wey all,
'I blysse you with my lyfte honde, foull you befall.'

Mankind, weary with labour, lays down his spade, and *Tutivillus*, invisible, carries it off. Mankind goes out into a place called 'the yerde,' but soon returns and falls asleep upon the ground. *Tutivillus* causes him to dream that his friend Mercy is hanged, and relates to the audience the substance of the dream, adding—

'But yet I herde, sers, he brake his necke *ab herode* in France,
'But I thynke he rydyth on the galous to lern for to dance;'

the meaning of which seems to be, that he had heard

that Mercy had broken his neck, as Herod was represented to do in France in some *Mistère* *. Mankind wakes, transformed to all evil dispositions, and New-guise arrives with a broken halter about his throat, having narrowly escaped hanging. He says of himself and his companions—

'We were nere sent Patrykes wey †, by hym that me bought;
'I was twychyde by the neke, the game was begunne:
'A grace was the halter brast a sonder, *ecce signum*,
'The halff is a bowte my neke, we had a nere runne.'

How Nought and Now-a-days escaped we are not told, but Mischief 'conde his neke verse:' he enters in fetters, pretending humorously that he is a man in armour, which occasions the rattling, and he is followed by the rest. Mankind joins them, and a good deal passes on the subject of making him a new jacket, which operation is intrusted to New-guise. It should seem that this process makes the outside of Mankind correspond with his inside, and he becomes an adept in the seven deadly sins.

At this point Mercy again suddenly makes his appearance, and Mischief and the others endeavour to hide Mankind from his sight, who becomes sensible of his lost condition, and in despair calls for a rope to hang himself. Mercy finds him, but Mankind dares

* No doubt there was a variety in the mode in which the death of Herod was produced. We have already seen, when speaking of the eighteenth play of the *Ludus Coventriæ*, that in the French *Mistère* Herod commits suicide. Possibly *ab herode* is miswritten in the text for the French *à l'herode*.

† An allusion to St. Patrick's Purgatory.

not come from his lurking-place. The conclusion is entirely serious, and sufficiently dull. Mankind repents, and is reconciled to Mercy; while Mischief, Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days, run off without the infliction of any poetical justice. Mercy at great length warns all to avoid them, and especially to beware of *Tutivillus*, who represents the sin of the flesh—

'And propylly Titivillus syngnyfyth the fende of helle,
'The flesch, that ys, the unclene concupyssens of your body. . . .
'Beware of Titivillus with his net.'

Mankind then retires — *hic exit Mankend* — and Mercy speaks the epilogue. By two Latin lines at the end, it seems that a monk, who calls himself *Hynghus*, had once been the owner, or possibly was the author, of this most singular manuscript.

PRINTED MORAL-PLAYS,

RELATING TO MANKIND AT LARGE.

NATURE—THE WORLD AND THE CHILD—HICK SCORNER—EVERY MAN—INTERLUDE OF YOUTH—LUSTY JUVENTUS.

One of the most ancient, if not the oldest, of our printed Morals, or Moral-plays, bears the title of '*Nature*;' and it was written by Henry Medwall, chaplain to Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury*. No other piece from his pen is extant, but there is no doubt that he wrote others; and one of them, 'Of the finding of Truth, carried away by Ignorance and Hypocrisy,' was acted before Henry VIII., in 1516. The title indicates very clearly the character of the production; and we know, besides (see Annals of the Stage, i. 65), that it was diversified by the introduction of a Fool, whose part seems to have given greater satisfaction than the rest of the performance. The 'goodly interlude' of *Na-*

* The title, as it appears in the only known copy of the production, is this:—'Nature—A goodly interlude of Nature, compyled by maister 'Henry Medwall, chapleyn to the ryght reverent father in God, Johan 'Morton, somtyme cardynall and archebyshop of Canterbury.' It is in folio, without date and printer's name, but most likely was from the press of John Rastell, to whom it has been usually assigned.

ture is in two parts*; and at the conclusion of the first, we find that it was played before Morton himself, who died in 1500, at the age of ninety-three years. It was therefore written, in all probability, very soon after he had been raised to the see of Canterbury †. His elevation took place in 1486, so that this 'interlude' was one of the earliest productions of the kind in the reign of Henry VII.

It proceeds upon the same allegory as the three MS. Moral-plays which have been just examined—the contest between good and evil in the mind of man. It is conducted and illustrated with ingenuity, and is written with considerable facility and power, when compared with dramatic productions by which it was unquestionably preceded.

Mundus and Worldly-affection are represented sitting on the stage, 'berynge a gown and cap, and a gyrdyll for Man,' when he enters, accompanied by Nature, Reason, and Innocency. Nature states that

* Dr. Dibdin (*Typ. Ant.*, iii. 104) observes that this production is 'only in two parts.' It is very unusual for an interlude to be divided even into two parts, for that division has no reference to acts and scenes. The second part was a separate day's representation.

† Warton (H. E. P., iii. 72, edit. 8vo.) observes, 'It is not improbable it was played before the archbishop;' but the author promises the second part,

'Whan my lord shall so devyse,
'It shalbe at his pleasure;'

meaning, when it shall be his pleasure to see it performed. Warton also states, without citing any authority, that 'it was printed by Rastel in 1538.'

God has appointed her his Minister on earth to instruct all creatures, and delivers the following spirited stanza, in assertion of her place and power.

'Who taught the cok his watche howres to observe,
'And syng of corage wyth shryll throte on hye?
'Who taught the pellycan her tender hart to carve,
'For she nolde * suffer her byrdys to dye?
'Who taught the nyghtyngall to recorde besyly
'Her strange entunys in sylence of the nyght?
'Certes, I, Nature, and none other wyght.'

She appoints Reason and Sensuality the guides of Man in the journey of life; but Mundus, aiding Sensuality in his seduction, Man dismisses Reason and his companion Innocency 'to the devyll of hell,' laughing at the latter for being as mute 'as a grey friar.' Pride, attended by his page, soon supplies their place; and wrapt up in admiration of himself, he does not on his first entrance observe Man. Part of his speech, addressed to the audience, on his own perfections, is worth quoting.

'Wote ye not how great a lord I am,
'Of how noble progeny I cam?
'My fader a knyght, my moder callyd madame,
'Myne aunceters great estatys?
'And now the lyvelod † ys to me fall
'By both theyre dethes naturall:
'I am spoken of more than they all
'Hens to Parys gatys ....
'I love yt well to have syde here
'Halfe a wote ‡ byneth myne ere;
'For ever more I stand in fere,

* *Ne wolde* or *would not.* † Livelihood. ‡ Foot.

'That myne nek shold take cold.
'I knyt yt up all the nyght,
'And the day tyme kemb yt down ryght,
'And then it cryspeth, and shyneth as bryght
'As any pyrled gold.'

This and some other parts of the performance are in the prevailing measure and form of the versification in the Manuscript Miracle-plays; but in the course of the piece, there are many judicious varieties, both of metre and rhyme. Pride introduces himself to Man, and whispers Sensuality, 'that all may hear,' to use his influence in ingratiating him with Man. As what he says is the only prose we have hitherto met with, either in Miracles or Morals, it may be extracted for its singularity, and because it affords another proof of the desire, on the part of Medwall, to introduce variety into his production, that the ear of the auditor might not be wearied by monotony—'Syr,' whispers Pride to Sensuality, 'I understand that thys gentylman 'is borne to great fortunes, and intendeth to inhabyt 'there in the contray; and I am a gentylman that 'al way hath be brought up with great estatys, and 'affied with them; and yf I myght be in lyke favour 'wyth thys gentylman, I wold be glad therof, and do 'you a pleasure.' Man, at the recommendation of Sensuality, agrees that Pride shall attend upon him; and while Man is gone out with Sensuality to a tavern, Pride and Worldly-affection talk upon the fitness of changing Man's apparel. Pride thus describes the dress he shall wear, affording a curious and minute picture of the fashions of the time.

'Syr, our mayster shall have a gown,
'That all the galandys * in thys town
'Shall on the fassion wonder:
'It shall not be sowed, but wyth a lace
Bytwyxt every some a space
'Of two handfull a sonder.

'Than a doublet of the new make,
'Close byfore and open on the bak:
'No sleve upon hys arme,
'Under that a shyrt as soft as sylk,
'And as whyte as any mylk,
'To kepe the carcas warm.

'Than shall hys hosen be stryped,
'Wyth corselettys of fyne velvet slyped
'Down to the hard kne;
'And fro the kne downward,
'Hys hosen shalbe freschely gard
'Wyth colours ij or thre.

'And whan he is in suche aray,
'There goth a rutter † men wyll say,
'A rutter, huf ‡, a galand.
'Ye shall se these foles on hym gase,
'And muse as yt were on a mase
'New brought into the land.'

After a quarrel between Man and Reason, the former striking the latter with his sword because he would not allow him to go with a couple of prostitutes, the hero of the piece falls into the fellowship of the seven deadly sins, who soon form part of his retinue,

* Gallants. † Knight.

‡ In the MS. Miracle-play of *Mary Magdalen*, we have seen that an insolent coxcomb thus enters—

'Hof, hof, hof, a frysh new galaunt,' &c.

but they all take feigned names in order to delude him: Pride is called Worship, Covetousness Worldly-policy, Wrath Manhood, Envy Disdain, Gluttony Good-fellowship, Sloth Ease, and Lechery Lust. Ere long Man discovers that he has been imposed upon, repents that he has driven away Reason, and leaving Worldly-affection, seeks Shamefacedness. At the end of the 'first part' of this Moral-play, Reason is reconciled to Man, and again takes him under her guidance. It closes with these lines:—

'And for thys seson
'Here we make an end,
'Lest we shuld offend
'Thys audyence, as god defend
'It were not to be don.
'Ye shall understand, never thelesse,
'That there ys myche more of thys processe,
'Wherein we shall do our besynes,
'And our true endevure
'To shew yt unto you, after our guyse,
'Whan my lord shall so devyse;
'It shalbe at hys pleasure.'

Man still promises to be ruled by Reason, in the opening of the 'second part;' but his good resolutions are soon overthrown by Sensuality, who tells him that Margery, one of the prostitutes whom Reason forbade him to follow, had gone 'stark mad' for love of him, and had entered into 'a religious place,' by which he means, in fact, the stews in Southwark*. Thither

*. This joke is employed in *Cock Lorell's Bote*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde. A pardoner says—

Man proceeds; and on his return, meeting Sloth, expresses his fears that Reason had 'gathered a great company' to take him by force. A contest between the two parties ensues, Man being assisted in his resistance to Reason by some of the deadly sins, but

'Syr, this pardon is new founde
'By syde London brydge in a holy grounde,
'Late called the stewes banke.
'Ye know well all, that there was
'Some relygyous women in that place,
'To whom men offred many a franke,
'And by cause they were so kynde and lyberall,
'A marveylous aventure there is befall:
'Yf ye list to here how.
'There came suche a wynde fro Wynchester
'That blewe these women over the ryver
'In wherye, as I wyll you tell:
'Some at saynt Kateryns stroke a grounde,
'And many in Holborne were founde,
'Some at saynt Gyles, I trowe.
'Also in *ave Maria* aly, and at Westmenster,
'And some in Shoredyche drewe theder
'With grete lamentacyon.
'And by cause they have lost that fayre place,
'They wyll bylde at Colman hedge in space
'A nother noble mansyon,
'Fayrer and ever the halfe strete was,
'For every house new pavd is with gras.'

Alluding to the prostitutes of that time taking to the fields where Coleman-street now stands. What is quoted would fix the date of the poem about the year 1506. Stow, referring to Fabian, says, that 'in '1506, the 21 of Henry VII., the said Stewe-houses in Southwark 'were for a season inhibited, and the dores closed up.' This inhibition (which proceeded from the Bishop of Winchester, whose palace was in that neighbourhood), according to the author of *Cock Lorell's Bote*, compelled the women to seek a livelihood elsewhere. 'In the year of 'Christ 1546 (adds Stow, Survey, edit. 1599, p. 332), the 37 of Henry 'VIII., this row of stewes in Southwark was put down by the King's 'commandment, which was proclaymed by sounde of trumpet.'

Gluttony, who is armed with 'a chese and a botell,' declines fighting. Pride also absents himself, and is rejected and disgraced by Man, who is subsequently once more reconciled to Reason by Age. He, however, adheres to Covetise, and when Sensuality asks Envy, where Covetise had dwelt so long? we meet with the following satirical stroke at the church and the law—the more remarkable as Medwall was chaplain to a Cardinal and an Archbishop. Sensuality speaking of Covetise says:—

'He dwelled wyth a prest, as I herd say;
'For he loveth well
'Men of the church, and they him also.
'And lawyers eke, whan they may tend therto,
'Wyll folow his counsell *.'

After a conference between Man and Reason, in which the former makes many promises of amendment, Meekness, the adversary of Pride, enters and gives his lesson: he is followed by Charity, Patience, Good-occupation, Liberality, Abstinence and Chastity. The two last consent to introduce Man to Repentance, and they take him away for that purpose: he soon returns, is welcomed by Reason, and promised salvation. The piece ends with an exhortation from Reason, and with

* Cornyshe informs us (Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 65) that Medwall's interlude of 'the Finding of Truth, carried away by Ignorance and Hypocrisy,' was 'not liked.' Perhaps the satire was too pungent at the dawn of the Reformation, and the hits too bold and well-directed.

'a goodly ballet' (not given) sung by the characters on the stage.

There are several other printed Morals which more or less, in conduct and moral, resemble the pieces already noticed. As three of these have been republished, and are therefore accessible to every body who wishes to examine their structure, they may be dismissed briefly.

The oldest, most likely, is *The World and the Child*, which came from the press of Wynkyn de Worde in 1522*, but the language is more ancient, and it was, doubtless, written before the close of the reign of Henry VII. Man is here represented in five stages of life—infancy when he is called Infans—boyhood when he is called Wanton—youth when he is called Lust-and-liking—maturity when he is called Manhood, and infirmity when he is called Age: in each of these conditions he is supposed to pass a number of years. Mundus sends him forth into the world, and he returns to his first master at every change. When Infans grows up to Manhood, he is dubbed a knight, and becomes acquainted with the

* The title is as follows:—'Here begynneth a propre newe Inter-'lude of the Worlde and the chylde, otherwyse called [Mundus & 'Infans] and it sheweth of the estate of Chyldehode and Manhode.' The colophon is this:—'Here endeth the Interlude of Mundus & 'Infans. Imprynted at London, in Fletestrete, at the sygne of y^e 'Sonne, by me Wynkyn de worde. The yere of our Lorde M.CCCCC 'and xxii. The xvii daye of July.' It is reprinted in vol. xii. of the last edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays*.

seven deadly sins, whom Conscience subsequently prevails upon him to renounce: Folly, however, postpones the reformation, and when Manhood has become Age, Conscience calls in the aid of Perseverance, who recommends confession and repentance (who are not personified), the employment of 'the five wits bodily,' and of the five wits spiritual, together with a belief in the Creed, seven Sacraments, &c. Age is thus reconverted, and takes the name of Repentance.

To show the antiquity of the performance, it is only necessary to quote a few lines from one of the speeches of Mundus, which are just in the boastful alliterative strain of Herod, Pontius Pilate, &c., in the older Miracle-plays.

'Lo, syrs I am a prynce peryllous yprovyde:
'I prevyd full peryllous, and pethely I pyght.
'As a lorde in eche londe I am belovyd:
'Myne eyen do shyne as lantern bryght.
'I am a creature comely out of care;
'Emperours and kynges they knele to my kne;
'Every man is ferde whan I do on hym stare' &c.

The dialogue between Manhood and Folly is particularly curious as a picture of manners: there Folly gives an account of himself, and of his adventures in Holborn, Westminster Hall, the taverns and the stews in Southwark; and as nothing is said of their inhibition, there can be little hesitation in assigning a date to the piece anterior to 1506. There is a remarkable passage in this colloquy, so strong in its ridicule of friars and nuns, that it seems hardly pos-

sible, even with the example of Medwall just before us, that it should have been written by an ecclesiastic*.

The Moral of *Hick Scorner*, also came from the press of Wynkyn de Worde†: it is without date, but it was, perhaps, published a few years later than *The World and the Child:* how long it continued a favourite with the people, may be judged from the fact, that in a tract called *Martin's Month's Mind*, printed in 1589, and attributed to T. Nash, the phrase 'Hick Scorners jests' is used proverbially, to signify the blasphemous scurrility with which the Scriptures had been attacked by the Puritans about the middle

* Manhood asks Folly to tell his adventures.

'*Folye.* In feythe syr over London brydge I ran,
'And the streyght waye to the stewes I came,
'And toke lodgynge for a nyght;
'And there I found my brother lechery.
'There men and women dyde folye,
'And every man made of me as worthy,
'As thoughe I hadde ben a knyght.
'*Manhode.* I praye the, yet tell me mo of thyne adventures.
'*Folye.* In feythe even streyght to all the freres,
'And with them I dwelled many yeres,
'And they crowned folye a kynge.
'*Manhode.* I praye the, felowe, whyder wendest thou tho?
'*Folye.* Syr all Englande to and fro:
'In to abbeys, and in to nonneryes also,
'And alway folye dothe felowes fynde.'

† Dr. Dibdin (Typ. Ant. ii., p. ix.) says, incautiously, that 'in the 'drama there is no single work yet found which bears the name of 'Wynkyn de Worde as the printer of it.' *Hick Scorner* is the second drama we have noticed from his press, besides the now lost 'Nigramansir,' which Warton saw with the name of Wynkyn de Worde attached to it, and the date of 1504.

of the reign of Elizabeth*. In fact the hero, to use Bishop Percy's words, 'agreeably to his name, scoffs at religion†,' but nevertheless he only figures in a single scene.

Pity, Contemplation, and Perseverance, lament the vices of mankind, and then give place to Freewill and Imagination, two libertines. Hick Scorner enters, and gives an account of his travels, mentioning 'the Regent,' which shows that the Moral was written in the reign of Henry VII., as, in the accounts of expenses of that reign, are several entries for fitting out that ship of war. Imagination and Freewill quarrel: Pity interposes, but they, assisted by Hick Scorner, set Pity in the stocks, where he has time to inveigh against the profligacy of the age. Contemplation and Perseverance restore him to liberty, and he goes out in search of those who had thus insulted him. Meanwhile Freewill returns, and after rather a long conference is converted from his wicked courses by Contemplation and Perseverance. Imagination makes a short resistance, and follows his example, but Pity does not again appear, and we are left to infer, that Hick Scorner is incorrigible and irreclaim-

* The name became proverbial before the close of Henry VIII. In a note in his translation of 'The Apothegmes' of Erasmus, printed by Richard Grafton, in 1542, Nicholas Udall makes use of it thus:—'Which publique offices, who so is a suitor to have, it behoveth the 'same not to plaie *Hicke Skorner* with insolubles, and with the idle knackes of sophistications,' &c.

† Reliques, i. 136. edit. 1812. The whole piece is reprinted in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*, i. 77.

able. Although in this piece the persons are allegorical, they have individual peculiarities; and in it we find one of the earliest attempts at distinctive character, and comic dialogue.

The 'Morall-playe' of *Every-man* (as it is called on the title-page) is one of the most perfect allegories ever formed *. Some points of its construction show that it was written at a very early period, perhaps in the reign of Edward IV.: it was printed once by Pynson, and twice by John Skot, in no instance with the year appended; but Pynson did not print any work with a date after 1531, nor Skot after 1537 †.

* The following is its title: 'Here begynneth a Treatise how the 'hye Fader of Heven sendeth Dethe to somon every creature to come 'and gyve a counte of theyr lyves in this worlde, and is in maner of a 'moralle playe:' the printer's colophon is this: 'Thus endeth this 'morall playe of Every-man. Imprynted at London, in Poules chyrche 'yarde, by me John Skot.' It is in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral, and is reprinted in vol. i. of Hawkins's *Orig. Engl. Drama.*

† Mr. Douce is in possession of a curious fragment of Pynson's edition, consisting of considerable portions of the last eight pages, and beginning with Sig. E i. Dr. Dibdin (Typ. Ant. ii. 565) doubts whether it ever came from the press of Pynson; but Mr. Douce's fragment has fortunately the following colophon. 'Imprynted at London, 'in Fletestrete, at the Sygne of the George, by Richarde Pynson, 'prynter unto the Kynges noble grace.' It sometimes varies materially from the edition by Skot, in Lincoln cathedral; and I subjoin the speech by the 'Doctoure,' (who winds up the performance) with the words in italic that in any respect vary from the hitherto known copy.

'This *memory all* men maye have in mynde,
'Ye herers take it *a* worthe, olde and yonge,
'And forsake pryde, for he *deceyves* you in the ende
'And remẽbre beaute, *v wyttes*, strength and *discrecion*:

'They

The character called Every-man is the representative of the whole human race, and after a short prologue by a 'Messenger,' the Deity delivers a soliloquy, in which he laments that the people forsake him, and 'use the seven deadly synnes damnable.' He summons Death (who it will be recollected is personified in the plays called *Ludus Coventriæ*), and sends him for Every-man. Death meets with the hero, delivers his message, and tells him to bring with him his 'book of counte.' Every-man is allowed to 'prove his friends,' and the first he accosts is Fellowship, who refuses to accompany him on his 'longe journey,' though ready to murder anybody to do his friend service. Every-man next applies to Kindred:

'They all *at last* do every man forsake
'Save his good dedes there *do* he take.
'But *beware, for* and they be small,
'Before god he *hathe* no helpe at all:
'None excuse may be there for every man.
'Alas, *howe* shall he do than?
'For after *deth* amendes may no man make
'For than mercy and pyte *dothe* hym forsake.
'If his reckenynge be not *clere* whan he *do* come,
'God wyll *say*, ite maledicti in ignem eternum.
'And he that hath his accounte hole and sounde
'Hye in heven he shall be crounde.
'Unto whiche, *please* god, brynge us all *thether*,
'That we may lyve body and soule togyder.
'Therto helpe the trinyte:
'Amen, saye ye for saynt charyte.

'FINIS.'

From a MS. note by Mr. Douce upon his fragment, I learn that *Every-man* was twice printed by Skot, one copy being with, and the other without a colophon. I have not met with the last.

'My cosyn, wyll you not with me go?'
'*Kindred.* No, by our Lady: I have the crampe in my toe:'

which is the only stroke of humour in the whole performance. Goods also refuses; and applying, in the last resort, to Good-deeds, Every-man finds her so weak that she lies on the ground, but points out to him the woful blank in his 'books of works and deeds.' She introduces him to Knowledge, and Knowledge carries him to Confession, where he also calls to his aid Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five Wits, who promise to accompany him before God. Every-man soon begins to grow weak: he says

'Alas! I am so faynt I may not stand:
'My limbs under me doth folde;'

and arriving at the brink of the grave, he calls upon his friends to enter it with him. Beauty first refuses, and her example is followed by Strength, Discretion, and Five Wits. Good-deeds only consents to accompany him, for even Knowledge remains behind. The moral is excellent, and it is admirably illustrated, and finally enforced in a sort of epilogue delivered by 'the Doctor.' In the employment of this personage, it will be remarked that this production resembles many of the Miracle-plays. In the performance *Every-man* must have wanted much of the character and variety, which are found in some other contemporary productions.

Of *The Interlude of Youth*, I shall speak somewhat more at large, as it is only known in the two old

editions, the one printed by John Waley *, and the other by William Copland, both without date. Although the Reformation had proceeded far towards completion before either copy could have been published, *The Interlude of Youth* is decidedly a Roman Catholic production, and I have therefore little doubt that it made its appearance during the reign of Mary. The general plan and the moral inculcated are, in a degree, similar to the pieces already described. Charity begins by enforcing the value of the virtue he represents, after which Youth enters, exclaiming, 'A backe, fellows, and gyve me roume.' Charity endeavours to produce a wholesome effect on his mind, and when he tells Youth that he shall go to Heaven if he follows good advice, Youth replies with some humour:—

'What, syrs, abowe the sky?
'I hah nede of a ladder to climbe so hie.
'But what and the ladder slyppe,
'Than I am deceyved yet;

* For the use of a copy of this rare production by Waley, I am indebted to Mr. Douce. It has a wood-cut on the title-page of two figures made, in this instance by ribands over their heads, to represent 'Charitie' and 'Youth,' but often otherwise employed by Waley, as they have little or nothing appropriate about them. At the end is the colophon: 'Imprinted at London by John waley, dwellyng in Foster Lane.' Waley printed between 1547 and 1558. Copland's Edition (in the Garrick collection) has also a wood-cut on the title-page, representing 'Youth' between 'Charite' and another figure which has no name over its head. The colophon is, 'Imprented at London, in Lothbury, over against Sainct Margaryte's church, by me Wyllyam Copland.' Copland printed between 1548 and 1561, and in his edition several misprints of the older copy are corrected.

'And if I fall I catche a quecke:
'I may fortune to breke my necke,
'And that joynte is yll to set.'

Charity retires after a vain attempt, and Riot enters, having (like New-guise in the Macro Moral) escaped from the gallows by the breaking of the rope. Riot introduces Youth to Pride, and when Youth talks of wanting a wife, Riot exclaims;—

'A wyfe! nay, nay, for God avowe*,
'He shall have fleshe inoughe,
'For by God that me dere bought,
'Over muche of one thing is nought.
'The devyl said, he had lever burne al his lyfe,
'Than ones for to take a wyfe.'

He successfully recommends Pride's sister, Lechery, for Youth's mistress, and they are about to start for the tavern, when Charity re-enters and endeavours to restrain them; but they bind him with a chain, until he is set free by Humility. A long wordy contest ensues: Charity and Humility endeavour to incite Youth to Virtue, while Riot and Pride instigate him to all kinds of vice, but especially to gaming. The speech of Riot contains a curious enumeration of games then in use:—

'Syr, can teache you to play at the dice†,
'At the quenes game, and at the Iryshe,
'The treygobet, and the hasarde also,
'And many other games mo.
'Also at the cardes I can theche you to play,
'At the triump, and one and thyrtye,
'Post, pinion, and also aumsase,
'And at an other they call dewsace.

* Fore God I vow. † Copland's edit. reads 'Syr *I* can teache,' &c

'Yet I can tel you more, and ye shyll con me thanke,
'Pinke and drinke, and also at the blanke,
'And many sportes mo.'

Youth listens very impatiently to Charity and Humility, and thus replies to the remark of Charity, 'that God had bought him.'

'What saye ye, mayster Charitie,
'What hath God bought?
'By my trouth, I knowe not
'Whether that he goeth in white or blacke.
'He came never at the stues,
'Nor in no place where I do use.
'I wis, he bought not my cap,
'Nor yet my joylie hat.
'I wot not what he hath bought for me.
'And he bought any thynge of myne,
'I wyll geve hym a quarte of wyne
'The nexte tyme I hym meete.'

Charity explains in what way Christ had bought all mankind 'on the roode,' and begins to make a favourable impression, which Riot and Pride in vain endeavour to counteract. Youth finally renounces them, and they abandon him. The conversion of Youth is complete, and he is promised by Charity that he shall be 'an heritour of bliss.' At the close, Humility and Charity solicit the indulgence of the 'meeke audience,' and pray for them. On the whole, this piece is one of the most amusing, and most humorous of the class to which it belongs. I have not thought it necessary to extract any of the doctrinal matter, to prove that its author was a Roman Catholic, and an enemy of the Reformation.

There are two main points of distinction between the Moral of *Lusty Juventus* *, and other pieces with the same design—the one of substance and the other of form: it is a production designed to enforce protestant tenets and to advance 'the new belief;' and it

* It is reprinted in Hawkins's *Origin*, &c., i. 113. There are two editions of the play, one in Lincoln cathedral, the other in the Garrick collection. The title is this, 'An interlude called Lusty Juventus, lyvely 'describing the Frailtie of youth: of Nature prone to Vyce: by Grace 'and Good Councell traynable to vertue.' The colophon is 'Imprinted 'at London in Paules churche yeard, by Abraham Vele at the sygne 'of the Lambe.' In the British Museum is a copy by Copland with this colophon, 'Imprynted at London in Lothbury, over agaynst Saint Margarits Church by Wyllyam Copland.' It was unknown to Hawkins. Dr. Percy is probably wrong in assigning, according to Hawkins, an edition which is imperfect at the end to Pynson, as the piece was evidently written either very late in the reign of Henry VIII. or in that of his son, and the last book printed by Pynson, with a date, is 1531. Abraham Vele printed between 1551 and 1581, the dates of his earliest and latest works with the year when they were published. *Lusty Juventus* concludes with a prayer 'for the prosperous estate of our noble and vertuous King,' which I apprehend must mean Edward VI. The Devil would hardly have been allowed, prior to the year 1531, to speak as follows of the progress of the Reformation, on the supposition (as I think mistaken) that the imperfect copy was from the press of Pynson.

'Oh, oh, ful well I know the cause
'That my estimacion doth thus decay:
'The olde people would beleve stil in my lawes,
'But the yonger sort leade them a contrary way.
'They wyll not beleve, they playnly say,
'In old traditions and made by men,
'But they wyll lyve as the scripture teacheth them.'

Afterwards Hypocrisy ridicules—

——— 'holy cardinals, holy popes
'Holy vestements, holy copes,' &c.

begins by representing Juventus in a state of grace through the exhortations of Good Counsel. The Devil soon afterwards enters, and employs his son Hypocrisy to seduce Juventus, which he effects by assuming the name of Friendship, and by calling in the aid of Fellowship and Abominable-living, the latter a prostitute. Good Counsel finds Juventus in the lowest state of vice and debauchery, and reclaims him, while God's Mercifull Promises undertakes to procure him forgiveness. Throughout the piece there is much abuse of the superstitions of popery, and the Devil is made to lament its downfall as the loss of the chief instrument by which he obtained possession of the souls of men. At the end we find the words 'Finis, quod R. Wever,' and perhaps he was the author of the piece, although he might be only its transcriber. *Lusty Juventus* is a wearisome performance compared with *The Interlude of Youth*, but it opens with the following song by the hero, which we afterwards find mentioned in another piece of the same class, and which may be fitly quoted, as an early specimen of a lyrical production, in a drama intended for representation.

'In a herber grene, aslepe where as I lay,
'The byrdes sange swete in the middes of the daye:
'I dreamed fast of myrth and play.
'In youth is pleasure—in youth is pleasure.

'Methought I walked stil to and fro,
'And from her company I could not go;
'But when I waked, it was not so.
'In youth is pleasure—in youth is pleasure.

'Therfore my hart is surely pyght
'Of her alone to have a sight,
'Which is my joy and hartes delyght.
'In youth is pleasure—in youth is pleasure.'

There is little peculiar in any part of the dialogue beyond its heaviness, and Good-council quotes the Scriptures, chapter and verse, in a manner truly edifying, but not very dramatic.

The only material variation between Vele's edition and that by Copland is, that in the epilogue to the first, the King, *i. e.*, Edward VI. is prayed for, while in the epilogue to the last, the word 'King' is changed for 'Queen;' but so careless was Copland, that he did not trouble himself to alter the corresponding rhyme: in his copy the lines stand thus:—

'Now let us make oure supplicacions together
'For ye prosperous estate of our noble and vertuous *quene*,
'That in her godly procedinges she may still persever,
'Which seeketh the glory of God a bove all other *thynge*,' &c.

GENERAL MORAL-PLAYS.

THE NATURE OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS—MAGNIFICENCE—THE TRIAL OF TREASURE—THE LONGER THOU LIVEST THE MORE FOOL THOU ART—LIKE WILL TO LIKE—THE MARRIAGE OF WIT AND SCIENCE—ALL FOR MONEY—THREE LADIES OF LONDON—THREE LORDS AND THREE LADIES OF LONDON—CONTENTION BETWEEN LIBERALITY AND PRODIGALITY.

The Morals, of a more general nature, and enforcing various lessons for human conduct, printed from the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. to the end of that of Elizabeth, are numerous; but the examination of some of them will be sufficient, as in the more material features they often resemble each other.

One of the most singular, as well as one of the earliest of these, is an 'interlude of *The Nature of the four Elements* *,' the whole scheme of which is an

* Dr. Percy attributes it, without citing any authority, to 'John Rastell, brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More,' and if he were not the writer, he was probably the printer of it. The only known copy is in the Garrick collection, and that is imperfect at the end, and it wants sheet D in the middle. The full title is this:—'A new interlude and 'a mery of the nature of the iiij elements, declarynge many proper 'poynts of phylosophy naturall, and of dyvers straunge landys, and of

endeavour by Nature-naturate and Experience, assisted by Studious Desire, to bring Humanity to a conviction of the necessity of studying philosophy and the sciences. They are opposed in this undertaking by Sensual Appetite, Ignorance, and a Taverner; and this is, perhaps, the first instance in a Moral of the introduction of a character, the representative of a trade, or occupation, and not of some virtue, vice, or quality. These three argue with Humanity that he should only gratify his passions. The motive of the author is explained in the long prologue (spoken by a 'Messenger'), where he complains of the 'toys and trifles' printed in his time, so that while in English there were scarcely 'any works of connynge,' the most

'dyvers straunge effects and causes: which interlude, if y° hole 'matter be playde, wyl conteyne the space of an hour and a halfe, but 'yf ye list ye may leve out muche of the sad mater, as the messengers 'pte and some of naturys parte and some of experyens pte, and yet 'the matter wyl depend convenyently, and than it wyll not be paste 'thre quarters of an hour of length.' This is succeeded by 'the 'namys of the pleyers,' eight in number; and it is added, 'also yf ye 'lyst ye may brynge in a dysgysinge.' Dr. Dibdin (Typogr. Ant. iii. 105) inserts it among the works from John Rastell's press, and in a MS. note at the beginning of the copy in the British Museum, it is asserted that it was printed by him in 1519. It is perhaps impossible, until another copy is discovered, to settle with precision the date when it appeared. Ritson (Anc. Songs, new edit. ii. lxxii.) calls *The Nature of the four Elements* 'the earliest Morality now extant;' but he must have forgotten, or not been acquainted with, H. Medwall's Interlude of *Nature*, which was written before the commencement of the sixteenth century, whereas Henry VII. is spoken of as dead in *The Nature of the four Elements*, so that there was, perhaps, an interval of twenty years between them.

'pregnant wits' were employed in compiling 'ballads' and 'other matter not worth a mite:' he adds, near the close:—

'This phylosophycall work is myxyd
'With mery conseytis to gyve men comfort,
'And occasion to cause them to resort
'To here this matter.'

All that the author on the title-page calls 'sad matter,' is serious and dull enough, Nature and Experience lecturing with most tedious learning on points of cosmography. The following is curious, as it relates to the discovery of America, about twenty years before the piece was written*, and, as a compliment to Henry VII. (then recently dead), he is made the cause of that discovery:—

'This See is called the great Occyan;
'So great it is, that never man
'Coude tell it seth the worlde began,
'Till now within this xx yere
'Westwarde be founde new landes,
'That we never harde tell of before this,

* Dr. Dibdin and others have supposed from hence that this interlude was written about 1510, as Columbus discovered the West Indies in 1492; but the author says nothing of Columbus, and does not seem to have known of his existence, attributing the finding of America to Americus Vespucius, who did not sail from Cadiz until 1497:

'But this newe lands founde lately,
'Ben callyd America, by cause only
'Americus dyd furst them fynde.'

This would fix the date of writing the piece about the year 1517, two years before it is supposed to have been printed, which seems more probable.

'By wrytynge nor other meanys,
'Yet many nowe have ben there.
'And that contrey is so large of rome,
'Much lenger than all cristendome,
'Without fable or gyle;
'For dyvers maryners have it tryed
'And sayled streyght by the coste syde
'Above v thousand myle. . . .
'And also what an honorable thynge,
'Bothe to the realme and to the kynge,
'To have had his domynyon extendynge
'There into so farre a grounde,
'Whiche the noble kynge of late memory,
'The moste wyse prynce the vii Herry
'Causyd furst for to be founde.'

Of the 'mery conseytes' in the piece, to render it more attractive, the following part of a scene between Sensual Appetite, the Taverner, and Humanity, will serve as a specimen.

'*Sen*[*sual Appetite.*] Why, wyll ye folowe my counsell?
'*Hu*[*manity.*] Ye.
'*Sen.* Than we wyll have lytell Nell,
'A proper wenche, she daunsith well;
'And Jane with the black lace.
'We wyll have bounsynge Besse also,
'And two or three proper wenchis mo,
'Ryght feyr and smotter of face.
'*Hu.* Now, be it so: thou art saunce pere.
'*Ta*[*verner.*] Than I perceyve ye wyll make gode chere.
'*Hu.* Why, what shulde I els do*?'

* The following list of his wines, given by Taverner, is curious:—
'Ye shall have Spayneshe wyne and Gascoyn,
'Rose coloure, white, claret rampyon,
'Tyre, Capryck and Malvesyne,

After dinner, they discuss the merits of one of the ladies recommended by the Taverner.

'*Sen.* Mary thus, canst thou tell us yet
'Where is any rose water to get?
'*Ta.* Ye, that can I well purvey,
'As good as ever you put to your nose,
'For there is a feyre wenche callyd Rose
'Dystylleth a quarte every day.
'*Sen.* By god, I wolde a pynte of that
'Were powryd evyn upon thy pate,
'Before all this presence.
'*Ta.* Yet I had lever she and I
'Where both to gyther secretly;
'For, by god, it is a prety gyrle.
'It is a worlde to se her whyrle,
'Daunsynge in a rounde.
'O lorde god, how she wyll tryp!
'She wyll bounce it, she wyll whyp,
'Ye, clene above the grounde.'

The author does not seem to have succeeded in his experiment of making the stage a vehicle of scientific instruction, and we have no proof that any other writer followed his example. It does not appear where the 'disguising,' mentioned in the title-page, was to be introduced, if more variety were required in the performance.

Skelton's 'goodly interlude and a merry,' called

'Sak, raspyce, Alicaunt, Rumney,
'Greke, ipocrase, new made clary,
'Suche as ye never had;
'For yf ye drynke a draught or too
Yt wyll make you, or ye thens go,
'By goggs body, stark madde.'

Magnyfycence, requires examination in some detail, on account of the celebrity of its author, and of its importance as a literary composition. On the title-page he is called 'Mayster Skelton, poet-laureate,' and the additional information is supplied, that at the time this Moral * was printed he was 'late deceasyd.' Warton states that it appeared in 1533, and that it was printed by Rastell; but, both these points are conjectural, inasmuch as neither date nor printer's name is found in the old copy. The type certainly resembles that used by John Rastell, and most likely the production was from his press. The date when it was written is also a matter of doubt, although we know that it was in existence in 1523, because Skelton mentions it with other pieces by him, some of them of the same description †, in his *Garlande or Chapelet of Lawrell*, which was printed by R. Faukes, in that year. Skelton's

* The Rev. T. F. Dibdin (Ames, iii. 106) says, that this production is 'called a Morality;' but this is a mistake. It is a Moral-play, and on the title-page it is called an 'Interlude.'

† The enumeration is curious, and as I believe it has never yet been reprinted, an extract may not be unacceptable: he mentions, in the following stanzas, at least three dramatic performances—*The Sovereign Interlude of Virtue*—*The Comedy of Achademios*, and *Magnificence*, upon the latter of which he seems to dwell with unusual satisfaction—

'In primis the boke of honorous astate,
'Item the boke how men shulde fle synne,
'Item royall demenaunce worshyp to wyne,
'Item the boke to speke well & be styll,
'Item to lerne you to dye when ye wyll.

'Of vertu also the soverayne enterlude,
'The boke of ye rosiar: prince arturis creacyoun,
'The false fayth y^t^ nor goth which dayly is renude:

Nigramansir was printed, according to Warton, in 1504, and very possibly *Magnyfycence* was written before the end of the reign of Henry VII., and while

'Item his dialoggis of ymagynacyoun,
'Item antomedon of loves meditacyoun,
'Item new gramer in englysshe compylyd,
'Item bowche of çourte, where drede was be gyled.

'His comedy achademios callyd by name,
'Of tullis familiars the translacyoun;
'Item good advysement that brainles doth blame,
'The recule ageinst gaguine of the frenche nacyoun:
'Item the popingay y^t^ hath in commendacyoun
'Ladyes and gentylwomen suche as deservyd,
'And such as he counterfettis they be reservyd.

'And of soveraynte a noble pamphelet,
'And of magnyfycence a notable mater;
'How cownterfet cowntenaunce of the new get,
'W^t^ crafty conveyaunce dothe smater and flater,
'And cloked collucyoun is brought in to clater
'W^t^ courtely abusyoun: who pryuteth it wele in mynde
'Moche dowblenes of the worlde therin he may fynde.

'Of manerly margery, maystres mylke and ale,
'To her he wrote many maters of myrthe,
'Yet thoughe he say it ther by lyith a tale,
'For margery wynshed and breke her hinder girth;
'Lor, how she made moche of her gentyll birth
'W^t^ gingirly go gingirly her tayle was made of hay,
'Go she never so gingirly her honesty is gone a way.'

Skelton carries on the enumeration much farther, but the titles of all the other productions he mentions are to be found in a note in Warton's Hist. Eng. Poet. iii., 163, 8vo. edit. The whole of this *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell* is a remarkable piece of egotism, and was probably written by the author in his old age. He gives the titles of at least fifty pieces from his pen, and he tells us, besides, that he had omitted many, 'as it were to long a proces to reherse all by name that he hath compylyd.' There is, I believe, but one copy of this tract in existence, that in the Royal Library. The author's vanity induced him also to place his portrait at the back of the title-page.

the author was tutor to Henry VIII., whose chaplain he afterwards became.

The moral purpose of *Magnyfycence* is to show the vanity of worldly grandeur. It opens with a soliloquy by Felicity, who is soon joined by Liberty, and while they are discussing the degree to which freedom ought to be allowed, Measure enters to moderate between the disputants, and he thus enlarges on his own importance.

'Oracius to recorde in his volumys olde,
'With every condycyon measure must be sought:
'Welthe without measure wolde bere hymselfe to bolde,
'Lyberte w'out measure prove a thynge of nought.
'I ponder by nomber, by measure, all thynge is wrought,
'As at the fyrst orygynall by godly opynyon;
'Which provyth well that measure shold have domynyon.
'Where measure is mayster, plenty dothe none offence,
'Where measure lackyth, all thynge dysorderyd is;
'Where measure is absent, ryot kepeth resydence,
'Where measure is ruler there is nothynge a mysse.
'Measure is treasure, how say ye, is it not this?'

Magnificence is immediately afterwards introduced, and becomes acquainted with Fancy, (who calls himself Largess,) with Counterfeit-countenance, Crafty-conveyance, Cloked-collusion, Courtly-abusion and Folly, who also impose upon him under feigned names. Courtly-abusion offers to carry him to a young lady, whose virtue is not inaccessible, and whose beauty is described with some luxuriance of style:

——————'a fayre maystresse,
'That quyckly is envyved with rudyes of the rose,
'Inpurtured with features after your purpose.

'The streynes of her veynes as asure Inde blewe,
'Enbudded with beautye and colour fresshe of hewe,
'As lyly white to loke upon her heyre,
'Her eyen relucent as carbuncle so clere:
'Her mouth embawmed dylectable and mery,
'Her lusty lyppes ruddy as a chery.'

Magnificence, ruined by his friends and retainers, falls into the hands of Adversity and Poverty, and the latter, in the following striking lines, contrasts the present with the former condition of Magnificence.

'That was wonte to lye on fetherbeddes of downe,
'Nowe must your fete lye hyer than your crowne.
'Where you were wonte to have cawdels for your hede,
'Nowe must you monche mamokes, and lumpes of brede.
'And where you had chaunges of ryche aray,
'Now lap you in a coverlet full fayne that you may.
'And where that ye were pomped with what that ye. wolde,
'Nowe must ye suffre bothe hungre and colde.
'With courtely sylkes ye were wonte to be drawe,
'Nowe must ye lerne to lye on the strawe.
'Your skynne that was wrapped in shertes of raynes,
'Nowe must be stormy beten with showres and raynes.'

Despair and Mischief next encounter Magnificence, and at the suggestion of the latter, who furnishes him with a halter and a knife, he is on the point of committing suicide, when Good-hope steps in, and stays his hand: he is followed by Redress, Circumspection and Perseverance, and they convince Magnificence of the weakness and vanity of his former state of exaltation, and he is content to move in a humbler and

happier sphere. Several attempts are made to enliven the serious part of the 'interlude,' by comic incident and dialogue, the burden chiefly resting upon Fancy and Folly, who on one occasion get Crafty-conveyance into their company, and persuade him to lay a wager that Folly will not be able to laugh him out of his coat: it is accomplished in the following humorous, but not very delicate manner.

'[*Here foly maketh semblaunt to take a lowse from*
'*crafty conveyaunce shoulder.*
'*Fancy.* What hast thou found there?
'*Foly.* By god, a lowse.
'*Crafty-convey.* By cockes harte, I trowe thou lyste.
'*Foly.* By the masse, a spanyshe moght with a gray lyste.
'*Fancy.* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
'*Crafty-convey.* Cockes armes, it is not so, I trowe.
'[*Here crafty convaunce putteth of his gowne.*
'*Foly.* Put on thy gowne agayne, for nowe thou hast
'lost.
'*Fancy.* Lo, John a bonam, where is thy brayne?'

The versification is varied, and the length of the piece required that much should be done to lighten the burden. What were subsequently called Skeltonic verses, from the use this poet made of them, (but which Skelton himself in this piece terms 'bastarde ryme of doggrell guise,' and which were of much older invention and application,) are frequently employed: the syllables are few, and the same rhyme repeated for six or eight lines together, but the effort is far more ingenious than the result is agreeable. A short specimen, from a speech where Counterfeit-

countenance describes himself, will be all that is necessary:—

'For counterfet countenaunce knowen am I:
'This worlde is full of my foly.
'I set not by hym a fly
'That cannot counterfet a lye,
'Swere and stare and byde therby,
'And countenaunce it clenly,
'And defende it manerly.
'A knave wyll counterfet now a knyght,
'A lurdayne lyke a lorde to fyght,
'A mynstrell lyke a man of myght,
'A tappyster lyke a lady bryght.
'Thus make I them wyth thryft to fyght;
'Thus at the last I brynge hym ryght
'To tyburne, where they hange on hyght*.'

The moralization at the end of the piece is spoken

* Among his 'Ancient Songs' Ritson does not include any specimen by Skelton. The following may, therefore, be worth adding in a note. It is sung by Liberty on re-entering, before he finds Magnificence in adversity:—

'With ye, mary syrs, thus sholde it be.
'I kyst her swete, and she kyssyd me:
'I daunsed the darlynge on my kne,
'I garde her gaspe, I garde her gle
'With daunce on the le, the le,
'I bassed that baby with harte so free:
'She is the bote of all my bale.

'A, so that syghe was farrefet,
'To love that lovesome I wyll not let,
'My harte is holly on her set.
'I plucked her by the patlet,
'At my devyse I wyth her met,
'My fancy fayrly on her I set:
'So merely syngeth the nyghtyngale.'

by Redress, Circumspection, Perseverance and Magnificence; and, from one of the stage-directions—*Hic aliquis buccat in cornu a retro post populum*—we might gather, that it was not played merely for a court entertainment, but before a popular assembly. The two last lines, in accordance with general custom, pray for the audience:—

'And ye that have harde this dysporte and game,
'Jhesus preserve you frome endlesse wo and shame.'

Skelton's aim in this Moral-play was against grandeur in general, but that of the 'new and merry interlude,' under the title of *The Trial of Treasure*, was directed particularly at the vanity of wealth*. It was written some years before it was printed, but subsequent to *Lusty Juventus*, which in fact is mentioned in it. The characters are sixteen, but the construction is so managed that only five actors were necessary for the representation, no more being on the stage at any one time. The plot is this:—Lust wrestles with Just, and is overthrown: he fetches Sturdiness to assist him, but they become acquainted with Inclination, the Vice of the piece, who introduces them to Elation and Greedy-gut. Just and Sapience in vain endeavour to convert and correct Inclination; and when he is alone, force upon him the

* The title is the following:—'A new and mery Enterlude called 'the Triall of Treasure, newly set foorth, and never before this tyme 'imprinted.—Imprinted at Londō in Paules Churchyarde, at the signe 'of the Lucrece, by Thomas Purfoote, 1567.' 4to. B. L.

bridle of restraint, curbing him so tightly that he can scarcely move. Lust sets him at liberty again, and in recompense Inclination carries Lust to Lady Treasure (with whom he falls in love), and to her brother, Pleasure. God's Visitation soon afterwards takes away Pleasure, and Time turns Treasure into 'rust and slyme.' The author promises in the 'preface' (for so he calls the prologue) to be 'merry and short;' but he is neither the one nor the other. The versification is tolerably easy, but Just, Trust and Contentation have several wearisome colloquies, varied only by the singing of a psalm. Some songs are also introduced, of which the following, by Lust, is the best:—

'Am not I in blissed case
'Treasure and Pleasure to possesse?
'I would not wish no better place,
'If I may still have welthines;
'And to enjoy in perfect peace,
'My Lady, Lady!
'My pleasant pleasure shall increase
'My deare Lady.

'Helene may not compared be,
'Nor Cresseda that was so bright.
'These cannot staine the shine of thee,
'Nor yet Minerva of great might.
'Thou passest Venus far away,
'Lady, Lady!
'Love thee I will both night and day,
'My dere Lady.

'My mouse, my nobs, my cony swete,
'My hope and joye, my whole delight!

'Dame Nature may fall at thy feete,
'And may yelde to thee her crowne of righte.
'I will thy body now embrace,
'Lady, Lady!
'And kisse thy swete and pleasaunt face,
'My dere Lady.'

Preceding the epilogue is the stage-direction, 'Praie for all Estates;' but no such prayer is given, and perhaps it was done in a set form.

The longer thou livest the more Foole thou art, by W. Wager, must have been an amusing production of its kind, consisting of fifteen characters, although the title states that 'foure may playe it easely.' It appears to have been written soon after Elizabeth came to the throne, but the exact date, either of the authorship or of the publication, cannot be fixed*. The moral enforced by the piece is the necessity of giving children a good and pious education; the hero, Moros, being represented in the outset as an ignorant and vicious fool, acquainted only with ballads and songs, some scraps of which he enters singing. The enumeration is curious. The stage-direction is, 'Here entreth Moros

* It is called, 'A very mery and Pythie Commedie called The 'longer thou livest the more foole thou art.—A Myrrour very neces-'sarie for youth, and specially for such as are like to come to dignitie 'and promotion: As it may well appeare in the Matter folowynge. 'Newly compiled by W. Wager.—Imprinted at London by Wyllyam 'How, for Richarde Johnes: and are to be solde at his shop under the 'Lotterie house.' This is followed by a list of the characters at the back of the title. Of W. Wager, the author, nothing is known; but he may have been related to the 'learned clerk, Lewis Wager,' who wrote the *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*.

'counterfaiting a vaine gesture and a foolish coun-
'tenance, synging the foote of many songes, as fooles
'were wont.'

'Brome, Brome, on hill,
'The gentle Brome on hill, hill;
'Brome, Brome on Hive hill,
'The gentle Brome on Hive hill,
'The Brome standes on Hive hill a*.

'Robin, lende me thy bowe, thy bowe,
'Robin the bow, Robin lende to me thy bow a.

'There was a Mayde come out of Kent,
'Deintie love, deintie love;

'There was a mayde cam out of Kent,
'Daungerous be [she]:
'There was a mayde cam out of Kent,
'Fayre, propre, small and gent,
'And ever upon the grounde went,
'For so should it be†.

* This is one of the ballads of Captain Cox, the Coventry mason, and it is mentioned by Laneham, in the list he supplies of them in his *Letter from Kenilworth*. 'What a bunch of ballets and songs, all ancient, as Broom, broom on hill,' &c. So that it was an old ballad in 1575.

† Ritson found no trace of the song of the 'Maid of Kent' either before or subsequent to the date of this Moral. It is probably the same which Stephen Gosson in his *Playes Confuted in Five Actions*, says, was introduced in a play at the Theatre prior to the year 1582. 'As for that glosing plaie at the Theater which proffers you so faire, 'there is interlaced in it a baudie song of *A Maide of Kent*, and a little 'beastlie speech of a new stawled roge, both which I am compelled to 'burie in silence, being more ashamed to utter them then they.' Sign. D 6. The 'glosing plaie' was *The Play of Plays*.

'By a banke as I lay, I lay,
'Musinge on things past, hey how *.

'Tom a lin and his wife, and his wives mother,
'They went over a bridge all three together:
'The bridge was broken and they fell in,
'The Devill go with all, quoth Tom a lin.

'Martin Swart and his man, sodledum, sodledum,
'Martin Swart and his man, sodledum bell †.

'Come over the boorne, Besse,
'My little pretie Besse,
'Come over the boorne, Besse, to me ‡.

* This is another of the ballads of Captain Cox. 'By a bank as I lay,' is one of those enumerated by Lancham. See Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, i. lxxxij. edit. 1829.

† This song is unquestionably as old as the reign of Henry VII. Martin Swart was sent over *in* 1486, by Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, to assist in an insurrection headed by Lord Lovell. Skelton alludes to it (as Ritson has remarked) in his poem 'Against a comely Coystrowne,' which must have been written before 1529—

'With hey troly loly lo, whip here Jak,
'Alumbek sodyldym syllorym ben,
'Curiowsly he can both counter and knak
'Of Martyn Swart and all hys mery men.'

'Martin Swart and his *man*' in the Moral probably should be 'Martin Swart and his *men*.'

‡ This ballad seems to have been very popular in the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth. A person of the name of William Birche wrote a dialogue between Elizabeth and England, on her coming to the crown, which thus commences—

'*England.* Come over the born, bessy, come over the born, bessy,
'Swete bessy come over to me,
'And I shall the take and my dere lady make,
'Before all other that ever I see.'

This very curious relic, which was printed by William Pickering, n. d.

'The white Dove sat on the castell wall,
'I bend my bow and shoote at her I shall,
'I put her in my glove, both fethers and all.
'I layd my bridle upon the shelfe:
'If you will any more, sing it your selfe.'

Discipline enters, and reproves Moros for his lightness; to which the latter answers:—

'I have twentie mo songs yet;
'A fond woman to my mother,
'As I war wont in her lappe to sit,
'She taught me these, and many other.
'I can sing of Robin Redbrest,
'And my litle pretie Nightingale;
'There dwelleth a jolly Foster here by west,
'Also, I com to drink som of your Christmas ale.'

Piety and Exercitation join their efforts to those of Discipline to reform Moros, and they find that he has at least as much knave as fool about him*. In reply to their exhortations, Moros observes—

'In S Nicholas shambles ther is inough,
'Or in Eastcheape, or at Saint Katherins:
'There be good poddings at the signe of the Plough;
'You never did eate better sauserlinges.

is preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, London, and is not noticed by Ritson, who only mentions that Edgar in *King Lear* sings the three lines in the text.

* While characters were allegorical (with very few exceptions, and that of Moros one of them) the author found it necessary to guard against any personal application of his satire: he says, in the prologue—

'But truly we meane no person perticularly,
'But only to specify of such generally.'

Much the same is said by the Devil in the *Ludus Coventriæ*.

'*Discipline.* This folly is not his innocency,
'Which can in this wise lewdly overwhart,
'But it is a malicious insolentie,
'Which procedeth from a wicked harte.'

While Piety and Exercitation hold him, Discipline scourges him, which makes him pretend contrition; but he soon relapses by the incitements of Idleness, Incontinence and Wrath, who however profess the greatest contempt for him, Wrath calling him 'as starke an Idiot as ever bore bable,' but giving him a sword and dagger, (probably of wood, such as those with which the Vice was usually provided,) and all promising to bring him acquainted with Nell, Nan, Megge, and Besse. One of the stews in Southwark is thus minutely described by Incontinence, as it no doubt then existed—

'You meane the thacked house by the water side,
'Which is whitlymed above in the loofe.'

They leave Moros on the stage at the sight of Discipline, and Moros lets fall his sword and hides himself. Fortune then declares her purpose in exalting Moros, observing—

'Seing that the vulgares will me not prayse
'For exalting good men and sapient,
'I will gette me a name an other wayes,
'That is by erecting fooles insipient.'

Moros, elevated to wealth, takes Impiety, Cruelty, and Ignorance as his servants, and 'disguises himself gaily in a foolish beard.' Impiety incites him against

'these new fellows,' the Protestants, and Moros declares that he will 'hang, burn, head, and kill' them without mercy. Discipline again enters, and Moros escapes, after endeavouring to summon courage to strike him with his sword and dagger. When they have withdrawn, the stage direction is 'Here entreth People,' and the representative complains of the cruelty and oppression of the powerful Moros. To indicate his advance in age, Moros enters 'furiously with a grey beard,' and People runs away from his wrath. God's Judgment then appears 'with a terrible vizard,' and strikes down Moros: Confusion follows, and they strip Moros of his 'goodly geare,' and put him on 'a fooles coate to weare.' Confusion threatens him with eternal fire, and requires him to accompany him, but but Moros replies:—

'Go with thee, ill-favoured knave?
'I had lever thou wert hanged by the necke:
'If it please the Devill me to have,
'Let him carry me away on his backe.
'*Confusion.* I will carry thee to the Devill, in deede:
'The world shalbe well ridde of a foole.
'*Moros.* Adew; to the Devill God send us good speede:
'An other while with the Devill I must go to schole.'

We are left to conclude that Confusion carries him away on his back to the Devil. This is the catastrophe of the piece, which winds up with some sage and pious reflections by Discipline, Piety, and Exercitation. It ought to be remarked, that the proverbial phrase, 'the longer thou livest the more fool thou art,'

which gives title to the Moral, is in constant use by Discipline and others throughout.

Ulpian Fulwel's *Like will to Like, quoth the Devil to the Collier**, contains some attempts at character, although the foundation of the piece is entirely allegorical: it is by no means regularly conducted, and a good deal has been sacrificed to produce laughter among the audience. The author thus states his design in the prologue.

'To what ruin ruffins and roisters are brought,
'You may heer see of them the final end:
'Begging is the best, though that end be nought,
'But hanging is the woorse, if they do not amend.
'The virtuous life is brought to honor and dignitie,
'And at the last to everlasting eternitie.'

Nichol Newfangle is the Vice, armed with his wooden dagger, and he is in fact the hero of the performance†: among his friends and companions are Rafe Roister, Tom Tosspot, Philip Fleming, Piers Pick-

* The title is, 'An Enterlude Intituled Like wil to like, quod the 'Devel to the Colier, very godly and ful of plesant mirth. Wherin is 'declared not onely what punishement followeth those that wil rather 'followe licentious living then to esteem and followe good councel: 'and what great benefits and commodities they receive that apply 'them unto vertuous living and good exercises. Made by Ulpian 'Fulwel. Imprinted at Lodon, at the long shop adioyning unto 'S. Mildreds Churche in the Pultrie, by John Allde. Anno Domini '1568.' There was another edition in 1587, also in 4to. printed for Edward Allde, which is that I have chiefly used.

† The manner of his first entrance, as noticed in the stage-direction, is singular: 'Heer entreth Nichol Newfangle, the Vice, laughing and 'hath a knave of clubs in his hand, which, assoon as he speaketh, he 'offreth unto one of the men or boyes standing by;' *i. e.*, among the spectators.

purse, Cuthbert Cutpurse, &c., who may be considered as individual personages, each with his several habits and peculiarities. The allegorical impersonations consist of Good Fame, Severity, Virtuous Life, God's Promise, and Honour. Lucifer, with 'his name written on his back and breast,' is also introduced; and Newfangle (who in name and nature resembles New-guise in one of the Macro MS. Moral-plays) claims him for his godfather, and adds that he had been apprenticed to him, and had thus learnt 'all kinds of sciences' that support pride:—

'I learned to make gowns with long sleeves and winges;
'I learned to make ruffs like calves chitterlings,
'Caps, hats, cotes, and all kinde of apparails,
'And especially breeches as big as good barrels.'

The Collier seems introduced merely for the sake of the proverb in the title, and he does not in any way aid the progress of the plot. He enters with empty sacks, admitting that he had sold only three pecks to the bushel. Nichol Newfangle introduces him to the Devil, and all three dance to the tune of 'Tom Collier of Croidon * hath solde his cole.' Tom Collier uses a

* The Collier of Croydon figures early in our dramatic poetry; and he is thus introduced among the satirical Epigrams of Richard Crowley, printed, according to Ritson, in 1550 and 1551, and fifteen of which are reprinted by Strype, in his Eccl. Mem., II. Rep. of Orig. 132.

'The Collier of Croydon.

'It is said that in Croyden there did sometyme dwell
'A collyer that did al other colyers excel.
'For his riches thys collyer might have bene a knight,
'But in the order of knighthood he had no delight.

rustic dialect, peculiar to him. The author has paid comparatively little regard to the conduct of his Moral, as long as he is able to give variety and to illustrate his proverb 'like will to like' &c., which is perpetually in the mouths of some of the characters. Rafe Roister and Tom Tosspot get drunk, and commit every kind of debauchery, but finally repent, while Pickpurse and Cutpurse are betrayed by Newfangle, and carried away by Hankee Hangman, with halters about their necks *. Virtuous Life is crowned by Honour, and Newfangle being carried off by the Devil, poetical justice is done on both sides.

The following, from a speech by Virtuous Living to the spectators in the course of the performance, will be a sufficient specimen of the serious part of the production.

'Wherefore, you that are heere learn to be wise,
'And the end of the one with the other waye,
'By that time you have heard the end of this play.

'Would God al our knights did mind coling no more
'Than thys collyer did knighting, as is sayd before:
'For when none but pore collyers did with coles mell,
'At a reasonable price they did their coles sell;
'But synce our knight collyers have had the first sale,
'We have payd much money, and had few sacks to tale.
'A lode, that late yeres for a royal was sold,
'Wyl cost now xvi shillings of sylver or gold.
'God graunt these men grace their polling to refrayne,
'Or else bryng them back to theyr old state agayne;
'And especially the colliar that at Croyden doth sell,
'For men thynk he is cosin to the collyar of hell.'

* I copy the following for its singularity, from the edition of 1568, in Malone's collection at Oxford.

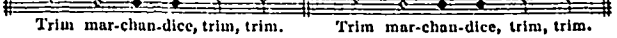
'Here entreth in Nichol Newfangle, and bringeth in with him a bag,

'But why do I thus much say in praise of vertue,
'Sith the thing praise worthy need no praise at all?
'It praiseth it self sufficiently, it is true,
'Which chaseth away sinne, as bitter as gall:
'And where vertue is it need not be praised,
'For the renowne therof shall soon be raised.'

The exits and entrances of the characters are marked with great punctuality, and the stage-directions are frequent and minute.

The Moral-play of *The Marriage of Wit and Science** contains a remarkable external feature not

'a staffe, a bottle, and two halters, going about the place shewing it 'unto the audience, and singeth this:



[*He may sing this as oft as he thinketh good.*

'Mary, heer is merchandise, who list to buy any?
'Come see for your love and buy for your money.
'This the land which I must distribute anon,
'According to my promise or I begon:
'For why, Tom Tosspot since he went hence
'Hath incresed a noble just to nine pence,
'And Rafe Roister, it may none otherwise be chosen,
'Hath brought a pack of wull to a faire paire of hosen.
'This is good thrift, learn it who shall:
'And now a couple of felowes are come from cut-purse hall,
'And there have they brought many a purse to wrack:
'Lo, heer is geer that will make their necks to crack.'

Just afterwards Tom Tosspot and Rafe Roister enter in great poverty, having squandered and gambled away all their money. The following singular stage-direction introduces them: 'Heere entreth Rafe Roister 'and Tom Tospot, in theft dublet and hose, and no cap nor hat on 'their head, saving a night cap, because the strings of their beards 'may not be seene, and Rafe Roister must curse and ban as he com-'meth in.'

* Its title is: 'A new and Pleasaunt enterlude, intituled the mariage

belonging to any other piece of this class that I remember to have met with: it is regularly divided into five acts, and each of the scenes is also marked. It has no date on the title-page, but it was licensed (according to Malone in a note in his copy of this most rare performance) between July, 1569, and July, 1570. The author, whoever he might be, has bestowed great pains upon his undertaking, and the construction of it is sufficiently ingenious, conveying, not without some humour, a very useful lesson*. Wit

'of Witte and Science. Imprinted at London, in Fletestrete, neare 'unto sainct Dunstones churche, by Thomas Marshe.' n. d. 4to.

* It should be observed, however, that for the whole of the allegory, the author of *The Marriage of Wit and Science* was probably indebted to an older piece, by a person whose name is new in our dramatic literature—John Redford. He seems to have been a professor of music, perhaps employed at court: he was contemporary with John Heywood, and, like him, wrote several dramatic pieces. One of these, nearly perfect, is contained in a very curious MS. belonging to B. Heywood Bright, Esq. which he was kind enough to place in my hands: in the same volume are traces of two other Morals, one of which has the name of John Redford appended. That upon which *The Marriage of Wit and Science* is founded (or more properly, from which it is in a great degree borrowed) has this conclusion, 'Thus endyth the play of Wyt and Science, made by master Jhon Redford.' The author of the printed copy has done little more than modernise the style of Redford, for, with one or two slight variations, he has adopted the conduct of the plot: one of these variations is, that in Redford's 'play' Confidence is made the attendant upon Wit instead of Will; and another, that Tediousness, instead of being represented as a giant, is made 'a fiend,' by Redford. Four persons, called Fame, Riches, Worship, and Favour, are also introduced by Redford, in order to sing a song and to be dismissed to the World, from whom they came, by Science who disregards them. Redford also has a long scene between Idleness and

is represented as the son of Nature, and he has fallen in love with Lady Science, the daughter of Reason

Ignorance, in which the former attempts to instruct the latter, who, as in the printed performance, is exhibited as an ill-disposed fool, and so clothed: when Wit, dressed as Ignorance, surveys himself in a glass Reason had given him, he finds that he is—

'Deckt, by gogs bones, lyke a very asse:
'Ignorance cote, hoode, eares; ye, by the masse,
'Kokscome and all.'

A few specimens from this very singular performance, which at the close prays for 'the King and Queen,' and which was clearly written late in the reign of Henry VIII., cannot be unacceptable. Confidence enters with 'the picture' of Wit, which he is about to convey to Lady Science, as a token of his master's love for her.—

'Ah syr, what tyme of day yst? who can tell?
'The day ys not far past, I wot well;
'For I have gone fast, and yet I see
'I am far from where as I wold be.
'Well, I have day inowgh yet, I spye;
'Wherfore, or I pas hens, now must I
'See thys same token heere, a playne case,
'What Wyt hath sent to my ladyes grace.
'Now wyll ye see a goodly pycture
'Of Wyt hym sealfe, hys owne image sure;
'Face, bodye, armes, leggs, both lym and joynt,
'As lyke hym as can be in every poynt.
'Yt laketh but the lyfe: well, I can hym thanke;
'Thys token in deede shall make sum cranke,
'For what wyth thys pycture, so well faverde,
'And what wyth those sweete woordes, so well saverde,
'Dystyllyng from the mowth of Confydence,
'Shall not thys apose the hart of Science.
'Yes, I thanke God, I am of that nature
'Able to compas thys matter sure,
'As ye shall see nŏw, who lyst to marke yt,
'How neately and feately I shall warke yt.'

The fiend Tediousness, who 'cumeth in with a vyser over hys face,' to make him look like a devil, swears by Mahound, in the usual style

and Experience. Wit wishes to obtain her hand in marriage at once, but his mother Nature informs

of old Miracles, and after he has defeated Wit, when not duly armed and prepared for the encounter, he exclaims—

'Lye thow there. Now have at ye, kaytyves:
'Do ye fle, i fayth? a, horeson theves!
'By Mahownds bones, had the wreches taryd,
'Ther necks wythowt heds they showld have caryd.
'Ye, by Mahownds nose, myght I have patted them
'In twenty gobbets I showld have squatted them,
'To teche the knaves to cum neere the snowte
'Of Tediousnes: walke furder abowte,
'I trow, now they wyll; and as for thee
'Thow wylt no more now troble mee:
'Yet lest the knave be not safe i nowghe,
'The horeson shall bere me an other kuffe.
'Now ly styll, kaytyve and take thy rest,
'Whyle I take myne in myne owne nest.'

It is said in the stage-directions, that Wit 'dieth' in consequence of his wounds, but he is very soon revived by Honest Recreation, and others, who, after a contest of words, are obliged to give up Wit to Idleness and Ignorance. Idleness thus abuses Honest Recreation.

'The Dyvyll and hys dam can not devyse
'More devylyshnes then by the doth ryse:
'Under the name of honest recreacion
'She bryngth in her abhominacion.
'Mark her dawnsyng, her maskyng and mummyng,
'Where more concupyscence then ther cunnyng;
'Her cardyng, her dycyng dayly and nyghtlye.
'Where fynd ye more falcehod then there? not lyghtly:
'Wyth lyeng and sweryng by no poppets,
'But teryng God in a thowsand gobbets.
'As for her syngyng and pypyng and fydlyng,
'What unthryftynes therein is twydlyng.
'Serche the taverns and ye shall here cleere
'Such bawdry as bests wold spue to heere;
'And yet thys is kald honest recreacion,
'And I, poore Idlenes, abhomynacion.'

The second contest between Wit and Tediousness (after the former is

him, that Science is only to be won by labour and perseverance. Nature, however, gives him Will for his servant, and desires him to try his fortune. When Will hears that his young Master is going upon a matrimonial adventure, he is alarmed and warns him to keep his wife, whoever she may chance to be, in subjection—

'Breake her betymes, and bring her under by force,
'Or elles the graye mare will be the better horse.'

Lady Science is represented coy and retiring, but being prevailed upon by her parents to admit suitors, Will delivers to her Wit's portrait, and she agrees to receive his visits. When Wit arrives, Reason introduces him to his friend Instruction, who has two servants named Study and Diligence; and Science consents to marry Wit after he shall have been for three or four years under their tuition. She also requires him, as her knight, first to conquer Tediousness, a great giant, and her deadly foe. Coming hastily to the encounter, not duly prepared, Tediousness gives Wit a blow, which throws him into a trance; but he

armed with 'sword of comfort,' sent by his lady on his repentance and reformation, and after he has been duly instructed by Diligence and Study) takes place within sight of Parnassus, upon which Science is seated to behold the conflict. After the victory, and before his marriage with Science, Wit puts on 'the gown of knowledge.' Several songs are sung in the course of the performance, and they are inserted in the same MS. volume, though not in the places to which they belong. The division of the Moral-play into acts and scenes was the work of the anonymous author who revived and modernised the production of John Redford. The same MS. contains many very curious songs by John Heywood and his contemporaries.

is recovered by Recreation, who sings to him a song while he dances: he exclaims—

'Will daunsing serve, and I will daunce untill my bones be sore.
'Pype us up a galiard, mynstrel, to begynne.'

Recreation soon leaves him, and Wit falls into the hands of Idleness and Ignorance, and after he is tired with dancing, the former lays him in her lap and sings as follows:—

'Come, come, lye downe, and thou shalte see
'Non lyke to mee to entertayne
'Thye bones and thee, opprest with payne:
'Come, come and ease thee in my lappe,
'And yf it please thee take a nappe;
'A nappe that shall delight thee soo,
'That fancies all wyll thee forgoe.
'Bye musinge styll what canst thou fynde,
'But wantes of wyll and restles mynde?
'A mynde that marres and mangles all,
'And breadeth jarres to worke thy falle.
'Come, gentle Witte, I thee requyre,
'And thou shalt hytt thy chiefe desyre,
'Thy chiefe desyre, thy hooped praye;
'Fyrste ease thee here, and then away.'

Wit falling asleep, Idleness and Ignorance strip him, and put upon his back the fool's dress of the latter, so that when Reason and Science find him, they deny all knowledge of him. Wit, not aware of the disguise in which he appears, exclaims—

'Hope holiday! mary, this is preety cheere.
'I have lost my selfe, I can not tell where.
'An old sayd sawe it is, and to trúe I finde,
'Soone hot sone cold, out of sight out of mind.'

Wit, surveying himself in a glass, which Reason had given him early in the piece, becomes sensible of his disgraceful appearance: Shame, introduced by Reason, then scourges Wit, until Science interposes for mercy. Wit repents, is again taken into favour, and with the aid of Instruction, Study, and Diligence again encounters Tediousness in the sight of his mistress, whom he entreats to behold the conflict—

'Here in my sight, good Madam, sitte and viewe,
'That when I list, I may looke uppe on you:
'This face, this noble face, this lively hiew
'Shal harden me, shal make our enemye rue.'

Wit strikes off the head of Tediousness after a severe contest, and presents it to Science; and the piece ends with their union amidst the rejoicings of Reason, Experience, Instruction, Study, and Diligence, in which Will also joins. Wit thus concludes—

'My payne is paste, my gladnes to beginne,
'My taske is done, my hart is set at rest,
'My foe subdued, my Ladyes love possest.
'I thancke my frends whose helpe I have at neede;
'And thus you see howe Witte and Science are agreed.
'Wee twaine hence forth one soule in bodyes twayne must dwel:
'Rejoyse I pray you all with mee, my frendes, and fare ye well.'

The piece was probably performed by boys, as Will is represented to be only twelve years old, and Wit not more than seventeen.

Lupton's *All for Money* * is one of the most elabo-

* The wording of the title-page is somewhat curious: it is called,

rate and involved of our later Morals, and the characters engaged in it are no less than thirty-two in number: among how many actors they might be divided, we are not informed by the author. It professes to represent 'the manners of men and fashion of the world' at the date when it was produced, but it is anything but a picture of manners, and the author directs his attack in various ways against avarice. On the title-page he terms his work a 'pitiful comedy,' and in the prologue, he tells us that it is also a 'pleasant tragedy,' but it has no pretensions to be considered either the one or the other.

Theology, Science, and Art lament the devotion of all classes to the acquisition of Money. Money then enters, and being taken suddenly ill, on the stage vomits Pleasure, the direction being, 'Here Money 'shal make as though he would vomit, and with 'some fine conveyance Pleasure shall appeare from 'beneath, and be there apparelled:' in her turn, Pleasure vomits 'Sinne, being the Vyce,' with his wooden dagger*: Sin afterwards in the same way produces Damnation with 'a terrible vizard,' and his garments painted with flames of fire, and Satan soon joins the party. The Devil 'cries and roars' lustily when

'A moral, and pitieful Comedie, intituled All for Money. Plainly re-
'presenting the manners of men and fashion of the world nowe adayes.
'Compiled by T. Lupton.—At London. Printed by Roger Warde
'and Richard Mundee, dwelling at Temple Barre. Anno 1578.' 4to.

* Just after he is born, he exclaims—

'I was afraied of nothing, but onely of my dagger,
'Lest in the time of my birth it would have sticked my father.'

he thinks Sin is about to desert him, who however is stayed by meeting Pride and Gluttony. Long conferences ensue between Learning-with-money, Learning-without-money, Money-without-learning, and Neither-money-nor-learning; after which All-for-money makes his appearance, 'apparelled like a ruler or magistrate,' to whom the Vice acts as servant. All his suitors and clients come before him—Gregory Graceless, Moneyless-and-friendless, William-with-the-two-wives, Nichol-never-out-of-the-law, Sir Laurence Livingless*, and finally, Mother Croote, the latter of whom, being a hundred years old, wishes to purchase a young husband of twenty-three. Moneyless-and-friendless is kicked out, but to all the rest, on receiving certain presents, All-for-money makes liberal promises. This brings us to the catastrophe, or enforcement of the moral, showing the consequences of avarice:—'Judas commeth in like a damned soule 'in blacke, painted with flames of fire, and with a 'fearefull vizard,' and he is followed by Dives, 'with 'such like apparel as Judas hath.' Damnation pursues

* A short quotation from what is said by Sir Laurence Livingless, a Catholic priest, will show the religious tendency of *All for Money*. Sin asks him, how many Epistles St. Paul wrote, and Sir Laurence thus answers:—

'By the masse, he writ to manie. I would they were all burned;
'For had they not bene, and the New Testament in English [turned]
'I had not lacked living at this time, I wisse.
'Before the people knew so much of the Scripture,
'Then they did obeye us, loved us out of measure;
'And now we can not go in the streetes without a mocke:
'The litle boyes will say, Yonder goes Sir John Smell-smocke.'

them, and drives them before him, while they make 'a pitiefull noyse.' Godly Admonition moralizes on all that has been represented, and being joined by Virtue, Humility, and Charity, the piece concludes.

It would be easy to enumerate more productions of this character, and to extend to a much greater length the analysis of them, without exhausting the subject, however it might exhaust the reader's patience. *The Three Ladies of London*, 1584*, and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, 1590, are among the latest specimens of the kind, in which an attempt is made to diversify the performance by a good deal of temporary allusion and general satire. The moral of the first of these productions, as it is stated on the title-page, precisely explains the nature of it: 'wherein 'is notablie declared and set forth how, by meanes of 'Lucar, Love and Conscience is so corrupted, that 'the one is married to Dissimulation, the other fraught 'with all Abhomination.' An illustration of the temporary allusions may be taken from *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*. The Clown of the performance is named Simplicity, and he carries a basket full of wares, ballads, and prints. Among the ballads he enumerates, 'Chipping Norton, a mile from Chap-'pell o' the heath'—'a lamentable ballad of the 'burning of the Pope's dog'—'the sweet ballade of

* This performance seems to have been popular, and it is mentioned in more than one tract written shortly after it was produced: after the publication of *The Three Lordes, &c. of London*, in 1590, *The Three Ladies of London* was reprinted in 1592.

'the Lincolneshire bagpipes'—and 'Peggy and Willy,—

'But now he is dead and gone,
'Mine own sweet Willy is laid in his grave.
'La, la, la, &c.'

One of the allegorical characters, Will, afterwards takes a 'picture' out of the Clown's basket, and asks whom it represents. Simplicity replies that it is Tarlton, which is followed by the question, 'What was that Tarlton?' Simplicity then informs him that Tarlton was originally a water-bearer, adding—

'O, it was a fine fellow as ere was borne!
'There never will come his like while the earth can corne.
'O, passing fine Tarlton! I would thou hadst lived yet...
'But it was the merriest fellow, that had such jestes in store,
'That if thou hadst seene him thou wouldst have laughed thy hart sore.'

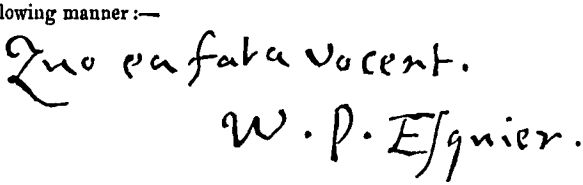
This Moral was printed two years subsequent to Tarlton's death, which happened on the 3d of September, 1588*, and it was probably first acted soon

* The prologue to *The Cuck-queanes Errant and Cockold's Errant* is supposed to be spoken by Tarlton's Ghost, and he there mentions his own death in the year of the defeat of the Armada. This play is in MS. in a volume containing five others by the same author (William Percy, writer of 'Sonnets to the Fairest Cælia,' 1594), in the possession of Mr. Haslewood, to whom I am obliged for the use of it. The name of W. Percy is now, for the first time, connected with our dramatic literature, but his productions of this kind, like his sonnets, have little or no merit; as, however, they importantly illustrate the condition of the stage at the period when they were written (soon after the year 1600), I shall have occasion to refer to them hereafter. They are all

after that event. It is to be observed also, with reference to this production, that the greater part of it is in blank verse, a circumstance that does not belong to any other Moral.

A later, and a duller performance of this class is *The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality*, 1602, which, as is stated on the title-page, and as appears by the epilogue, was acted before Queen Elizabeth. The forty-third year of her reign is mentioned in the body of the piece; but it possesses few of the improvements which, towards the close of the sixteenth century, were introduced into Morals. The only reason for mentioning it is, that it was one of the last, as well as one of the worst, of its kind. It has been attributed to the celebrated Robert Greene, and he may have had some concern in it prior to 1592, as a revival of an older performance.

in the peculiar hand of the author, who subscribes most of them in the following manner:—



His name is no where inserted at length, but his authorship has been clearly ascertained by the owner of the MS.

One of the latest notices of Richard Tarlton occurs in a tract printed in 1642, called 'The Pigge's Corantoe, or Newes from the North,' where the following lines are attributed to him, which have since often received a different application:—

'The King of France, with forty thousand men,
'Went up a hill, and so came downe agen.'

This is called, in the tract, 'old Tarlton's song.'

MORAL-PLAYS

RESEMBLING COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.

TOM TILER AND HIS WIFE—CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE—DISOBEDIENT CHILD—JACK JUGGLER—CAMBYSES—APPIUS AND VIRGINIA—ALBION—COMMON CONDITIONS—NICE WANTON.

THE dramatic pieces I now propose to examine make advances, more or less distant, to tragedy, to comedy, and to that species of theatrical performance which our ancestors called 'history,' although, in form and substance, they are still to be classed with Moral-plays. They consist of a mixture of individual character and allegorical impersonation. It has been seen in some of the productions of this kind already reviewed, that attempts were made at a very early date to invest even symbolical representatives with metaphysical as well as physical peculiarities, and to attract for them a personal interest.

One of the most remarkable pieces of this description is called *Tom Tiler and his Wife*, which was first published in 1578*, and again in 1661, and which, in the last edition, professes on the title-page to be a re-

* On this point I follow Ritson, Ancient Songs, ii. 31, edit. 1829. I have seen no copy older than that of 1661 in any collection, but he was no doubt as correct as usual.

publication of an interlude 'printed and acted about a hundred years ago *.' It affords some internal evi-

* It was re-printed by F. Kirkman, to whose account many knavish tricks of the bookselling trade have been laid: in this instance, however, he was guilty of no imposition. It bears for title, in his edition: —'Tom Tyler and His Wife. An excellent old Play, as it was Printed 'and Acted about a hundred years ago. The second Impression. Lon-'don, printed in the year 1661.' 4to. b. l. At the end is a list of the plays which Kirkman had then on sale, including many very curious dramas. In what way he became possessed of them may partly be gathered from the following account which he gives of himself, and his connexion with the stage, in a volume he printed in 1673, called *The Unlucky Citizen*, the introduction to which bears date on the 23d of August in that year, on which day he was exactly forty-three years old:—

'It may be I may make bold with the plot or story of an English 'stage-play, when it is fit to my purpose. I am sure those stories 'must be good, for our English comedies and tragedies exceed all 'other nations now in every thing. I know that the French did exceed 'us in ornaments of the stage, gallantry of apparel, variety of music 'and dancing, and strangeness of their machines: but now we are 'grown up to them, and in all things equal them in these outside 'matters; and as to the inside, the soul of the play, which is the plot, 'contrivance and language, we still outdo them and all the world. 'This is my opinion: You may, if you please, give me leave to be a 'competent judge of these things, for I have been a great lover of 'them, a student in and well-wisher to these mathematics, as I shall 'acquaint you anon: for now being a freeman, having my liberty to 'come and go, when and where I listed, I studied my pleasure and 'recreation, the chiefest of which, and the greatest pleasure that I took 'being in seeing stage-plays. I plied it close abroad, and read as fast 'at home, so that I saw all that in that age I could: and when I 'could [not] satisfy my eye and my ear, with seeing and hearing 'plays acted, I pleased myself otherwise by reading, for I then began 'to collect, and have since perfected my collection of all the English 'stage-plays that were ever yet printed; and I have them all, and have 'read them all, and therefore I suppose my judgment may pass as

denee that it was produced not long after the rebellion of 1569. It appears from the prologue that, like many other pieces of about the same date, it was performed by children:—

'To make you joy and laugh at merry toys,
'I mean a play set out by pretty boys.'

The plot is a mere piece of merriment relating to the sufferings of Tom Tiler under the affliction and inflictions of a shrewish wife. It is opened by Destiny, called 'a sage parson,' and Desire, 'the Vice;' and from what passes between them, it appears that Destiny has married Tom Tiler to a wife named Strife, under whom he leads a most miserable existence, for, besides being a scold, she is fond of drinking with her acquaintances, Sturdy and Tipple. Tom Tiler meets his friend, Tom Tailor, 'an artificer' of shreds and patches, and communicates his sufferings. Tom Tailor proposes to change clothes with Tom Tiler, and thus disguised as her husband, Tom Tailor gives Strife so sound a beating that, after the humblest submission, she is obliged to take to her bed. Tom Tiler then obtains his own clothes again from Tom Tailor, and returning home, he compas-

'indifferently authentic. And I have had so great an itch at stage-'playing that I have been upon the stage, not only in private to 'entertain friends, but also on a public theatre: there I have acted, 'but not much nor often; and that itch is so well laid and over, that 'I can content myself with seeing two or three plays in a year; but I 'still continue in this opinion, that they are the fittest divertisements 'for our English gentry.'—p. 258.

sionates his wife's condition, and goes to bed to her. She is still ignorant of the trick, and declares that she never can love him again after the beating he has given her: Tom Tiler unwarily acknowledges that Tom Tailor had done it for him, and Strife says,

'Alas! I may mone; I might have been woone
'With half these strokes, but curstnesse provokes
'Kind hearts to dissever, and hatred for ever
'Most commonly growes by dealing of blowes.'
'Therefore blame not me, if I cannot love ye
'While we two have life.
'*T. Tiler.* By my halydome, wife,
'Because ye say so, now shall ye know,
'If you will content you, that I do lament you;
'For I will tell you true, when I saw you
'Ever brawling and fighting, and ever crossebiting,
'Which made me still wo, that you should thus do,
'At last hereafter I complained the matter
'To Tom Taylor, my master, who taking a waster *,
'Did put on my coat, since you will needs know it,
'And so being disguised, he interprised
'To come in my steed, and having my weed,
'You pleading your passion after the old fashion,
'Thinking it was I, stroke him by and by.
'Then straight did he, in steed of me,
'Currie your bones, as he said, for the nones,
'To make you obey.
'*Strife.* Is it even so as you say?
'God's fish, you knave, did you send such a slave
'To revenge your quarrel in your apparel
'Thou shalt abide †, as dearlie as I'—

* A *waster* is a stick.

† This word would tend to prove the genuineness of the production, though printed by Kirkman, if we had no other evidence.

and then she snatches up a stick and 'lays load upon him' most unmercifully, until he exclaims—

'Oh wife, wife! I pray thee save my life!
'You hurt me ever, I hurted you never.
'For God's sake, content thee.
'*Strife.* Nay, thou shalt repent thee,
'That ever Tom Tayler, that ruffian and railer,
'Was set to beat me: he had better he had eat me.'

Tom Tiler escapes to his friend Tom Tailor, and relating his disaster and the cause of it, the latter abuses him and strikes him in the presence of Destiny. Strife enters, and reviles both, until Patience arrives and composes all matters in difference, rendering Tom Tiler contented with his wife, and Strife more merciful to her husband. The whole is written in short couplets, two of which the printer has usually placed in one line. Six songs are interspersed in various lyrical measures, but none of them of peculiar merit.

The Conflict of Conscience * by Nathaniel Woodes,

The old word was 'aby,' which is found in *Ferrex and Porrex*, and many other authorities of the time—

'Thou, Porrex, thou shalt dearly 'bye the same;'

and the author of *Tom Tiler and his Wife* made it rhyme to 'I' in the same line; but Kirkman, thinking it a little obsolete, altered it to 'abide,' and so lost the jingle.

* The following is its title at large.—'An excellent new Commedie 'Intituled, The Conflict of Conscience. Contayninge a most lamentable 'example of the dolefull desperation of a miserable worldlinge, termed 'by the name of Philologus, who forsooke the trueth of God's Gospel, 'for feare of the losse of lyfe and worldly goods. Compiled by Na-'thaniell Woodes, Minister in Norwich. [Sixteen 'Actors names, 'devided into six partes.'] At London, Printed by Richarde Bradocke, 'dwelling in Aldermanburie, a litle above the Conduict. Anno 1581.' 4to. b. l.

Minister of Norwich, is one of the earliest Moral-plays in our language in which an historical character is introduced, and then only under the feigned name of Philologus, though the fact is stated in the Prologue, that by Philologus is meant Francis Spiera, an Italian lawyer, who, as the title-page expresses it, 'forsooke 'the truth of God's Gospel for fear of the loss of life 'and worldly goods.' He committed suicide, according to Sleidan *, in the year 1548, and his story and fate became soon afterwards very notorious in this country. The Moral, or, as the author terms it, 'comedy,' which relates to his backsliding and suicide, was not printed until 1581, but it had been written at least twenty years earlier. The characters in it are real and allegorical, the former including Spiera, his two sons, Cardinal Eusebius, &c., and the latter Conscience, Hypocrisy, Tyranny, Spirit, Avarice, Horror, Sensual-suggestion, &c. The story, such as it is, is thus conducted. Philologus is represented as a rich and zealous partisan of the Reformation: Tyranny receives orders from Rome to search for heretics, in which search he is aided by Hypocrisy and Avarice. Caconos, a Catholic priest speaking the Scotch dialect †, directs them to the house of Philo-

* In his 'xxix Livres d'Histoire,' &c. fol. Geneva, 1563, Liv. 21.

† He is also represented in the lowest state of ignorance, knowing his Mass-book, or Portas, only by the illuminations: the following is his description of it, and of his mode of doing duty, and it may also serve as a specimen of his dialect, then a novelty on the stage.—

'Far in my portace the tongue ay [I] de nat knowe,
'Yet when ay see the great gilded letter

logus. The Cardinal summons Philologus before him, and the Reformer defends his tenets until threatened with imprisonment and torture. Sensual-suggestion then induces him to return to popery. During a scene with his sons, Spirit, Conscience, and Horror attack Philologus, and Eusebius and Theologus are sent to give him spiritual consolation. Philologus cannot pray, refuses to listen to their counsel, and rushes out: a Nuntius then informs the audience that after thirty weeks of affliction and despair, which are supposed to elapse, Philologus had hanged himself.

There is nothing in the language of the piece which deserves particular observation. The versification is generally heavy and cumbrous, often in lines of fourteen syllables, and the performance must have been a dull one, although the author endeavoured 'to refresh the minds of the auditors' by 'some honest mirth,' which only consists of a contention between Hypocrisy, Tyranny, and Avarice, for superiority, ending in the admission of equality. It is, therefore, not worth extracting, and the subsequent two stanzas from a

'Ay ken it sea [so] well, as nea man ken better:
'As far example, on the day of Chraistes Natyvitie
'Ay see a Bab in a manger and two beasts standing by.
'The service whilk to newyeares day is assaygnd
'Bay the paicture of the Circumcision ay faynd.
'The service whilk on Twalfth day mun be don
'Ay seeke bay the marke of the three kynges of Colon.
'Bay the Devill tenty-ig Chraist ay faind *wradragesima:*
'Bay Chraist on the crosse ay serch out Gude Frayday.
'Pasch for his marke hath the Resurrection:
'Ayenst Hally Thursday is pented Chraistes Assention.
'Thus in mayn owne buke ay is a gude clarke.'

speech by Philologus, in answer to those who wished to console him in his disgrace and affliction, is certainly the best specimen of the serious portion of the Moral.

'The healthfull neede not phisicks art, and ye which are all haile
'Can give good counsell to the sicke their sicknesse to eschew;
'But here, alas, confusion and hell doth mee assaile,
'And that all grace from me is reft I finde it to be true.
'My heart is steele, so that no faith can from the same insue.
'I can conceive no hope at all of pardon or of grace,
'But out, alas! confusion is alway before my face.

'And certainly, even at this time, I doo most playnly see
'The devils to be about me rounde, which make great preparation,
'And keepe a stirre here in this place, which only is for mee.
'Neither doe I conceive these things by vaine imagination,
'But even as truly as mine eyes beholde your shape and fashion.
'Wherefore, desired Death, dispatch, my body bring to rest,
'Though that my soule in furious flames of fire be supprest.'

Satan is introduced as a great friend of the Pope, whom he calls his 'darling dear,' and his 'eldest boy,' and he interests himself deeply in the apostacy of Philologus.

*The Disobedient Child**, by Thomas Ingeland, 'late

* The following is the title it bears: 'A pretie and Mery new Enterlude, called the Disobedient Child. Compiled by Thomas Ingelend,

Student in Cambridge,' is less like a Moral-play than any piece we have yet noticed, since the introduction of the Devil, in the usual manner, constitutes its strongest resemblance to that species of dramatic representation. The hero is called 'the Rich-man's son,' and he has married 'the young woman' (whose name appears to be Rose) against his father's wishes; and the lesson enforced is the misery arising from imprudent matrimonial connexions. The lady turns out to be a vixen and a spendthrift; but before this discovery is made, the husband and wife have a long conference on the happiness of the married state.

'*The Wyfe.* Sometymes they ryde into the countrey,
'Passynge the tyme wyth mirth and sporte,
'And when with their fryndes they have ben merye,
'Home to their owne house they do resorte.

'*The Husband.* Sometymes abrode they go to see playes,
'And other trym syghtes for to beholde;
'When often they meete in the hye wayes
'Muche of their aquaintaunce they knewe of olde.'

The husband soon finds the woful mistake he has committed, for he is set to the severest drudgery, and because he murmurs, we meet with the following stage directions:—'Here the wife must strike her husband handsomely about the shoulders with something'—'Here the wife must lay on load upon her husband'—and 'Here her husband must lie along on the ground,

'late Student in Cambridge. Imprinted at London in Fletestrete, 'beneath the Conduit, by Thomas Colwell.' n. d. 4to. b. l. The copy of this rare drama which I have used is in the Collection at Bridgewater House.

as though he were sore beaten and wounded.' The son returns to his father, who relieves his pecuniary wants, but is unable to rid him of his wife, under whose castigations he is supposed to be left to suffer, as an evil arising out of his own imprudence. The Devil seems to be brought in merely by way of agreeable variety, and to fill up an interval while the son is returning to his father: he enters with his usual exclamation, 'Ho, ho, ho!' often repeated, and is a very disinterested fiend, for he gives the younger part of the audience the following good advice:—

'Wherfore (my dere children) I warne ye all
'Take hede, take hede, of my temptacion;
'For commenly at the last ye have the fall,
'And also brought to desperacion.
'Oh, it is a folye for many to stryve,
'And thynke of me to get the upper hande,
'For unlesse that God make them to thryve,
'They can not agaynst me sticke or stande.'

After a long speech by 'the Peroratour' comes the Epilogue, which may be taken as a sample of those appended to most dramas of the time:—

'Here the rest of the Players come in, and kneele 'downe all togyther, eche of them sayinge one of these 'Verses.

'And last of all, to make an ende,
'O God, to the we most humblye pray,
'That to Queene Elizabeth thou do sende
'Thy lyvely pathe, and perfect waye.
'Graunte her in health to raygne
'With us many yeares most prosperouslye;
'And after this lyfe for to attayne
'The eternall blysse, joye and felycytie.

'Our Bysshoppes, pastoures, and Mynisters also,
'The true understandynge of thy worde
'Both nyghte and daye, nowe mercyfully showe,
'That their lyfe and preachynge maye godly accorde.
'The Lordes of the Counsell and the Nobylytie,
'Most heavenly Father, we thee desyre,
'With grace, wisdome, and godly polycie,
'Their hartes and myndes alwayes inspyre.
'And that we thy people, duelye consyderynge
'The power of our Queene and great auctorytie,
'May please thee, and serve her without faynynge,
'Lyvynge in peace, rest, and tranquilytie.'
'God save the Queene.'

Jack Juggler * resembles a Moral, in having a character called the Vice, as *the Disobedient Child* has that popular personage, the devil, to bring it within the same class. It is one of the very oldest pieces in our language founded upon a classic original, the author professing, in his prologue, to have been indebted to 'Plautus' first comedy†.' From passages,

* The title is as follows. 'A new Enterlued for Chyldren to playe, 'named Jacke Jugeler, both wytte and very playsent. Newly Im-'prented.' [The players' names and a wood-cut of Dame Coy, Boungrace, and Jack Juggler.] Colophon, 'Imprinted at London in Lothbury, by me Wyllyam Copland.' 4to. b. l.

† Before the date when 'Jacke Jugeler' was probably written, the Andria of Terence had been translated into English and acted: the fact that it was performed appears from the last stanza of the prologue, and the first of the epilogue.

'Of this matter shall rou all our comedy,
'Which playnlyer anon declaryd shalbe.
'But I must go, I may no lenger tary;
'The players be come now, I do them se,

both in the prologue and epilogue, it is to be collected that the piece was written before the Reformation was completed :—

——————' for higher things endite'
' In no wise he wold, for yet the time is so quesie,
' That he that speaketh best is lest thank worthie.'

' Lo, this is Simo: it is tyme for me
' To go hens; therfore I pray you all here
' To gyve audyence unto the matter.'

The Epilogue, also spoken by ' the poete,' opens thus:—

' Syth we have play'd now this lytill comedy
' Before your wisdoms, as we pretendyd,
' To take it in gre we besech you humbly,' &c.

The words 'before your wisdoms' look as if the piece had been performed as a school or college exercise. It is without date and printer's name; but the type is like that of John Rastell. The prologue, in the earlier portion of it, praises Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, and adds some curious remarks on the improvement which had even then taken place in our language.

' By these men our tong is amplyfyed so,
' That we therin now translate as well as may,
' As in eny other tongis other can do:
' Yet the greke tong and laten, dyvers men say,
' Have many wordys can not be englyshid this day:
' So lyke wyse in englysh many wordys do habound
' That no greke nor laten for them can be found.

' And the cause that our tong is so plenteouse now,
' For we kepe our englysh contynually,
' And of other tongis many wordis we borow,
' Which now for englysh we use and occupy.
' These thingis have gyven corage gretly
' To dyvers, and specyally now of late,
' To them that this comedy have translate.'

So that it was the work of more than one hand. Where, and under what circumstances it was performed, we have no account. The version in general is literal, but the following short extract will show that the

The author delivers himself more plainly upon this point in the epilogue :—

'Such is the fashyon of the worlde now a dayes,
'That the symple innosaints are deluded,
'And an hundred thousand divers wayes
'By suttle and craftye meanes shamefullie abused,
'And by strength, force, and violence oft tymes compelled
'To belive and saye the moune is made of a grene chese,
'Or els have great harme and parcase their life lese.'

translators adapted it, in some degree, to the manners of the time in which they lived. It is from Act iv. Scene 3.

'*Mysys.* Good lord, is there any good properte sene
'In any man remaynyng now continually?
'For I thought Pamphilus to my mastres had bene
'A man and a lovying frend, ever redy.
'But, god wot, this gere she takyth hevely
'For more sorow, I wene, then his love is worth
'She doth take. But lo, Davus comyth forth.
'What, man, I the pray, what meanyth thys dede?
'And whether wilt now thys chyld bere?
'*Davus.* Of thy quyk wit, Mysys, now have I nede,
'And of thy sutteltie unto thys gere.
'*Mysys.* What purposyst?
'*Davus.* Take this chyld of me here,
'And quykly lay hym a fore our gatis round.
'*Mysys.* What, I pray the, uppon the bare ground?
'*Davus.* Of from the aulter some rushes take
'And straw them.
'*Mysys.* Why wilt not thou so do?
'*Davus.* For if it happen that I must an oth make,
'That I layd it not there, then may I, lo,
'Clerely swere.
'*Mysys.* A, now thy hole mynd I know.
'Where dydyst all thys pope holynes fynd?'

Hence it will be perceived that the seven-line stanza is observed even in the dialogue between the characters. The epilogue again apologizes

We may infer, therefore, that this interlude was written either in the reign of Edward VI. or Mary, though not published until Elizabeth had been a few years on the throne. The printer has added no date, but it was entered on the Stationers' books in 1562; and, as none of William Copland's dated books came from his press after 1561, we may conclude, with tolerable certainty, that its appearance was not delayed beyond 1563. The story is by no means complicated, and there is a good deal of humour in the manner in which the few incidents are brought about.

Master Bongrace sends his lacquey Jenkin Careaway to his mistress Dame Coy, but Jenkin plays at dice, loiters and steals apples by the way. Jack Juggler, 'the Vice,' without any apparent motive but the love of mischief, watches him, and dressing him-

for the rudeness and imperfectness of the translation, notwithstanding 'the englysh tong is now sufficient.' A hope is expressed, that by this example others will be induced to make similar attempts, as the authors hold it best, that before Englishmen, plays should be English.

Another dramatic piece, (as far as a judgment can be formed from the appearance of the type) also from the press of John Rastell, indicates at this period the growth of a classic taste in England. Only a fragment of it is known, which is in the possession of Mr. Douce, and the whole of this is part of a scene between two characters called Philonides and Menippus. The page is divided into two columns, one being occupied by the Latin original, and the other by the translation. It appears to have formed part of a modern Latin play, possibly by Rightwise, master of St. Paul's, and acted at Court by the children under his care. In the part that is left, Menippus is giving an account of a journey he made to hell.

self like Jenkin, determines to try to persuade Jenkin 'that he is not himself but another man.' He of course finds some difficulty in his undertaking, and among other arguments resorts to the forcible, and in this case convincing one of blows: Jenkin is persuaded out of his identity, and makes the following comic appeal upon the subject to the audience.

'But, maysters, yf you happen to see that other I,
'As that you shall is not verye liklye,
'Nor I woll not desyre you for him purposelye to looke,
'For it is an uncomparable unhappye hooke;
'And if it be I, you might happin to seeke,
'And not fynd me out in an hole weeke:
'For whan I was wonte to rune a waye
'I used not to cum a gaine in lesse than a moneth or tway.
'Houbeit for all this, I thinke it be not I,
'For to shew the matter in dyde, trulye,
'I never use to rune awaye in winter nor in vere,
'But all wayes in suche tyme and season of the yeare
'When honye lyeth in the hyves of bees,
'And all maner frute falleth from the trees,
'As apples, nuttes, peres, and plummes also,
'Wherby a boye may live a brod a moneth or two.
'This cast do I use, I woll not with you fayne;
'Therfore I wonder if he be I sertaine.
'But and if he be, and you mete me a brod by chaunce,
'Send me home to my maister with a vengaunce.'

His blunders and confusion on this point get him into disgrace with Dame Coy, who bestows 'a cudgel blessing' upon him, and tells his master 'to joll his head to a post.' Even at the conclusion he has great difficulty in arriving at a conviction that he is himself and not some other man. Besides the liveliness

of some part of the dialogue, there is a decided attempt at character in the piece, as may be seen from the following description by Jack Juggler of Alice Trip-and-go, a smart maid-servant attendant upon Dame Coy.

'She simperith, she prankith, and getteth with out fayle,
'As a pecocke that hath spred and sheweth hir gaye taile.
'She minceth, she brideleth, she swimmeth to and fro;
'She tredith not one here a wrye, she tryppeth like a do:
'A brode in the strete, going or cumming homward,
'She quaverith and wardelith like one in a galliard. . . .
'She talketh, she chatteth like a pye all daye,
'And speaketh like a parat poppagaye;
'And that as fine as a small silken threede,
'Ye, and as high as an eagle can fle for a neade.'

A very brief notice of Thomas Preston's *Cambyses, King of Persia*, and of *Appius and Virginia*, by R. B., will be sufficient, as the former was reprinted by Hawkins *, and the latter is in the last edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays* †. They are both productions of a similar construction, containing a mixture of history and allegory, and they were written nearly about the same date, in neither case clearly ascertained, but certainly early in the reign of Elizabeth. Of the two, *Appius and Virginia* deserves the preference, both for matter and style, although the compound strikes us in each as nearly equally absurd: perhaps in *Cambyses* it is the more ridiculous, from the insertion of characters intended to heighten the comic effect of the piece with the aid of Ambidexter the Vice. The

* *Origin of the English Drama*, i. 243. † Vol. xii. p. 337.

author of *Cambyses* does not seem himself to have known what to call his performance, but consistently with the discordant materials of which it is formed, he terms it on the title-page 'a lamentable Tragedy, mixed full of pleasant mirth.' For much the same reason, R. B. (the initials of the author of *Appius and Virginia*) calls his piece a 'tragical comedy:'—he names his Vice Haphazard, who intermeddles in everything, and makes great efforts to be amusing. Conscience, Justice, Rumour, Comfort, Reward, and Doctrina, are the impersonations employed, chiefly to punish Appius and to console Virginius. There is not the least attempt at dramatic propriety and decorum: Virginia and her mother go to 'church,' and Virginius, like a sound orthodox believer, explains the creation of man and woman according to the book of Genesis. The singularity of these pieces is, that (with the exception, perhaps, of *The Conflict of Conscience*) they are the earliest endeavours in Morals to bring historical events and characters on the stage.

I have reserved for this place a notice of a most curious dramatic relic, remarkable not merely on account of its extraordinary rarity, but because it is the only specimen of the kind in our language. It is a fragment of a political Moral, consisting of twelve closely printed pages in 4to., the object of which seems to have been to illustrate and enforce the right rules of government for a State; and there is reason to suppose that it was suppressed immediately after its

performance*: this circumstance will account for the fact that no other copy is known of any part of the interlude†: the portion preserved was recovered

* In the Annals of the Stage, under date of Christmas 1558-9 (see vol. i. p. 171), it is mentioned that a play was performed before the Queen of 'such matter that the players were commanded to leave off.' It is possible that *Albion Knight* was the very piece then interrupted, and that it had been prepared in order to give Elizabeth, in the very outset of her reign, a lesson upon government. Colwell, the printer, might think that five or six years afterwards there would be no objection to its publication.

† Mr. Douce has a single leaf of an interlude, which may possibly have been part of the same production; it is marked with the signature A iij, and the persons engaged in the dialogue are Humility, Temperance, and Disobedience, the last of whom wishes to pass by the name of Prosperity. Disobedience seems to have just entered, and exclaims to the two others who have been talking—

'Peas, whan I bydde you, and come whan I call:
'I am royally provyded of lande and of fe,
'Noble Disobedyence of might moost potencyall,
'Yet wolde I be called by name due prosperyte.
'Sholde I be obedyent to the superlatyfe degre,
'Ne yet to no creature that lyveth in londe.
'Sythe I am fre I wyll never be bonde.'

On a very slight provocation he strikes Temperance, and is reproved by Humility; on which he exclaims, in a different measure—

'What make ye in this countre?
'Your warke is all in vanyte;
'Ye can not prevayle.
'Audacyte and Dysobedience,
'With Adversytees presence,
'[Th]us wyll we rayle.'

The following lines look as if the piece to which this fragment belongs had had a political tendency—

'*Humilite.* This tale to here it is a pyteous case.
'God banyshe this vyce from this countre,
'And restore obedyence in every place,

from the fly-leaves of an old book, where it had been originally placed by the binder as waste paper. In the year from 1565-6, Thomas Colwell entered on the Stationers' books for publication, 'A mery Playe bothe pythy and pleasaunt of Albyon Knight,' which I apprehend is the performance in question, of which a Knight named Albion (a personification of England) is the hero: the type of the fragment resembles that of Thomas Colwell, although, as it is without beginning or end, his name is not to be found upon it.

Of how many characters, in its entire state, the piece consisted it is impossible to ascertain: those introduced in the course of the twelve pages extant * are the following:—Albion, a Knight; Justice; Injury (who seems to have been the Vice of the piece) and Division. Other personifications of Temporalty, Spiritualty, Principality, Commonalty, Sovereignty, Peace and Plenty are mentioned, but do not appear in the fragment. In the commencement of it Injury, under the assumed name of Manhood, endeavours to

'That every creature may knowe his degre,
'And ever to dwell with Humylite.
'Than grace wyll folowe vyce to eschewe,
'And every man to his maister wolde be trewe.
'*Disobe.* That wyll they never, by sweto Jesu.
'*Tempe.* I wolde from this place that thou wolde [go],
'And remembre thy mysse that thou hast wrought,
'For moche is the sorowe that thou hast do,
'And all disobedyence thou hast in brought.'

The words or letters within brackets are worn away in the original.

* Consisting of the outer fold of sheet B and the whole of sheet C. I should apprehend that it formed, perhaps, one-third of the complete production. It is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

impose upon Justice, who is not easily persuaded that Injury is the person he pretends to be, and observes—

'Thou spekest lyke a Lorell, full larg and full lewdly,
'And not lyke a childe gotten of true matrymony;
'And yet though thy person enduce no lykelyhode,
'That in thee shuld be any manhode,
'Yet besyde that, thou seemest of manhode frayle,
'Because so abused is thy lyght apparaile.'

Albion, who is also present, entertains at first considerable doubts upon the point, on which Injury exclaims—

'Now Chrystes benedycyte,
'How Albion and Justyce hath forgot mee!
'Because of mee they had no exercyse
'Of long tyme by any enterpryse.
'Wherfore, sithen ye can not know me by experience,
'I wote not how ye shuld know me but by my credence:
'Therfore by my trouth and by my honestie,
'Believe me for Manhode: trulie I am hee.
'*Albion.* Then by your othe I am content
'To have your frendshyp with good assent;
'And, Justice, I pray you to do the same.
'*Justice.* Syr, if Manhod be hys name,
'As he hath sworne, I wolde be glad
'That hys frendshyp also I had.
'*Albion.* Then, Justyce, I pray you bothe,
'Let me knyt you both upon hys othe.
[*And then he taketh both their hands togither, saieng*]
'Now freindes I trust we be all three,
'And with this knot I pray you contented to bee.'

We subsequently find Injury, while mistaken for Manhood, endeavouring to persuade Albion. that wholesome acts of parliament are not enforced as

they ought to be, but are allowed to sleep, because they touch the Lords spiritual and temporal; so that, although passed to benefit merchants and the commonalty, they are declared by the great only 'fit to wipe a pan.' Albion is alarmed by these apparent truths, and it is easy to perceive how objectionable what follows might be to the court—

'*Albion.* Alas, if this may not reformed bee,
'I shall never be sure of prosperitie.
'*Injuri.* Ye, and what foloweth hereof, maister Albion?
'To your person universall derysion.
'*Albion.* Why to me derision?
'*Injuri.* For all other straunge nacions
'They will raile on you with open proclamacions,
'Saienge, whosoever do as he dose
'Is halfe a man and halfe a wyld goose.'

Justice is also alarmed, and both he and Albion quit the stage in great haste to treat with Principality, and to endeavour to pacify Commonalty, who appears to have been enraged at the existence of such gross abuses. After they are gone, Injury speaks a long soliloquy, in which he expresses his determination, with the aid of his 'olde mate, called Dyvysion,' to counteract the proceedings of Justice and Albion, and to drive peace from the latter. We subsequently meet with the following stage-direction: 'Here Injury goeth out, and then Division commeth 'in with a byll, a sword, a buckler, and a dagger.' He sings a song expressive of his disposition, of no merit, until Injury returns—

'*Divisyon.* What, myne old freinde, Injury!
'How were other hanged, and thou let go by?
'*Injury.* By god, because I tooke delaye
'For lacke of thee to be myne atturneye.
'*Divisyon.* What, horson, woldest thou have mee
'Be trussed up in stede of thee?
'*Injury.* Ye, by god, but even for a saye
'That I might lerne of you to know the playe.'

When they have grown serious, Injury informs Division that he is on good terms with Justice and Albion, and that he has 'turned the wrong side of his hood,' in order to bring all to confusion. Division expresses his willingness to aid in the undertaking, and Injury asks how he will proceed? Division replies—

'I have two spyes of great exercyse;
'The one is called Double Devyce.
'Hym wyll I sende, I may tell thee,
'Unto the court to Pryncypalytye,
'And hym wyll I charge, that wyth his provysion
'Principalytye and the Comons to set at dyvysyon.
'The second spye is called Olde Debate,
'A synguler fellow with a ballyd pate.
'Hym wyll I send to the lordes spirituall,
'To cause them to wrangle with the lords temporall.
'*Injuri.* What shall they use in their devise?
'*Division.* The one to Principalytie shall surmyse,
'That the comons hartes do aryse
'Against him, when that he doth aske,
'In tyme of neede, our money for taske,
'His harte to move with such unkyndnes.
'Then the same spye shall use lyke doublenes,
'And go to the comons, and to them tell
'That Principalytie with equitie doth rebell,
'More to hys lucre in everie deale
'Applying his affection, then to the comenweale.

'And how that he of neglygence
'Doth not apply for theyr defence,
'Neither by sea nor by londe,
'Neither by hye wayes, neither by stronde,
'But theves and raveners and murders eke,
'Dayly true men they pursue and seke:
'And that his lawes indifferently
'Be not used, but maintenaunce and brybary
'Is suffred alone without reformacion,
'That the poore Comons is in altercation
'Of this matter, and wote not what to say,
'Bringing them in opinion that they ought not to pay
'To Pryncypalytie theyr duety of very desarte,
'Except lyke duetie be mynistred on hys parte.'

All this was speaking very home, and although it was put into the mouth of an evil character, it would be very easily liable to misinterpretation, independent of its disposing the minds of the people to consider whether there was not some truth in the complaints of Division. He proceeds to inform Injury that Old Debate is to be employed to sow dissension between the Lords spiritual and the Lords temporal, on the ground that the former were low-born upstarts, who ought not to be allowed to interfere in matters of government, and yet assumed to themselves the chief authority of the state. Injury on his part undertakes to stay a marriage projected between Albion and Plenty, the daughter of Peace, which union is promoted by Justice. For this purpose the Vice desires Division to take the name of Policy, and to hasten to Albion in order 'to teche him a wrong cross row,' and in order, as 'he loveth fair flesh of

all meats,' to advise him to recreate himself with Mirth and Prodigality,

> 'And take his owne good, while he maye,
> 'Lest all at last be brybid awaye;'

which are the last lines of the fragment. It is not difficult to conjecture, according to the usual course of pieces of this class, that the author made his political moral terminate in the defeat of the scheme of Injury and Division, and in the happy union of Albion and Plenty. From what is left of it I am well warranted in terming it a most remarkable production, without any parallel in English, and in rejoicing in having been the means of rescuing it, even in its imperfect state, from total oblivion.

This division of the subject cannot be better illustrated than by the examination of a production, in which the separate natures of a moral and a romantic play appear to be mixed and united.

The 'pleasant comedy called *Common Conditions*' is a singular performance, and only one copy of it, and that imperfect, is known: it was sold to Steevens at Dr. Wright's sale in 1787, and Malone had a transcript made from it, which is now in the Bodleian Library. As it has neither beginning nor end it is not possible to ascertain when, and by whom, it was printed, but it may be conjectured that it was published about 1570. It comes very much within the general description given by Stubbes of certain pieces in his time, consisting of 'the adventures of amorous knights

'passing from country to country for the love of their 'ladies*.'

There are two pairs of lovers in the performance, who journey from Arabia to Phrygia, from thence to Thrace, to the isle of Marofus, and back again to Phrygia; and the chief connexion between them is the character called Common Conditions, who is the Vice of the performance, and at one time endeavours to promote, and at another to defeat, the happiness of all parties. He is at first the servant of Sedmond and his sister Clarisia (the offspring of Galiarbus, a banished nobleman), and afterwards of Lamphedon, son to the Duke of Phrygia, who is enamoured of Clarisia; but the Vice ultimately turns pirate. The names of the other pair of lovers are Nomides, an Arabian knight, and Sabia, the daughter of a French physician; but the varied history of neither couple is concluded at the end of the fragment, though it is pretty clear that the author designed his piece to end happily.

The whole is, of course, in rhyme, generally in lines of fourteen syllables, but occasionally much shorter; or rather perhaps with two words rhyming together, inserted in the middle of a long line, as in the following example:—

'Lo heare deare dame, judge of the same as lightly as you maie.
'I shall, sir knight, unto my might and simple skill here saie...'

The piece commences, as we have it in its imper-

* *Plays confuted in Five Actions*.—Sig. C 6.

fect state, with a scene between Shift, Drift, and Unthrift, three tinkers in Arabia, who sing, and afterwards rob Sedmond and his sister Clarisia. Conditions, the Vice, is attending upon them, and being captured, the thieves are about to hang him, when he offers to do the office for himself, if they will give him the halter, and let him ascend the tree. They consent, and when he is up he keeps them at bay with his knife, and calls loudly for assistance, upon which they are glad to make their escape. This may be quoted as the best specimen of the humorous part of the performance :—

'*Conditions.* Ha! and there be no remedie, but that needs hang I must,
'Give me the halter: Ile to it my self, and laie all care in the dust.
'*Unthrifte**. I am sure thou meanest not to hang without helpe of a friend.
'*Cond.* Ist not as good to hang my self as another hale the ende?
'*Unthrifte.* By gogs bloud, my maisters, and he will we are all content,
'For then in tyme for hanging hym we neede not repent.
'Well, Drifte, give the halter unto the elf.
'*Cond.* Ha! was there ever little knave driven to hang hymself?
'Nay, I must also request your aide to helpe me into the tree.
'*Shifte.* Naie, if you lacke any helpe, then hang us all three.
'So lawe—now dispatche, and with spede make an ende.
'*Cond.* What to doe?

* He is by a misprint called *Thrifte* in this part of the scene.

'*Drifte.* Marie, hang thyself.
'*Cond.* Naie, by your leave, that is more than I doe intende.
'*Unthrifte.* Why, I am sure thou intendest not to serve us in such sort.
'*Cond.* Were not he mad would hang hymself to shewe three tinkers sport?
'*Shifte.* Why, I am sure to serve us so thou doest not intende.
'*Cond.* A mad foole he were would desperatly die, and never did offende.
'*Shifte.* By gogs bloud, Ile teare him doune, or els Ile lose my life.
'*Cond.* Backe againe, or Ile be so bolde as pare your nailes with my knife.'

The classical allusions in the serious dialogue are numerous, and the following, between Nomides and Sabia, each accusing the other sex of lightness and infidelity, shows that the author was a man of some little reading.

'*Nomides.* Not wrongfully but rightfully I shall expresse your love;
'And therefore, ladie, heare my talke that I in breef shall speake,
'And after, if you please, againe replie your minde to breake.
'First, what love I praie you bare *Helena* unto her lorde and kyng?
'What constancie in *Creseda* did rest in every thyng?
'What love I praie you bare *Phedria* unto her *Theseus*,
'When in his absence she desired his sonne *Hippolitus*?
'What true love eke bare *Medea* unto Duke *Jason* he?
'Tushe, ladie, in vaine it is to talke, they all deceitfull be;
'And therefore, ladie, you must yeeld to me in that respect:

'Men still are just, though women must their plighted vowes neglect.....

'*Sabia.* Then, Sir Knight, how faithfull was *Eneas* to *Didoes* grace?

'How faithfull was Duke *Jason*, he whom *Medea* did aide,
'To whom he plighted faithe by vowe none other to imbrace,
'When he to winne the golden fleece by *Otes* was dismaide?
'And *Theseus*, I praie you also, how faithfull did be bide,
'When that the vowe he once had made to *Ariadne* he denide?
'How faithfull was *Diomedes*, one of the Greekish crue?
'Though *Troilus* therein was juste, yet was he founde untrue.
'And so betweene these twaine and Fortunes lucklesse hap,
'She was like lazer faine to sit, and beg with dishe and clap.
'Tushe, tushe, you see to trust in men whose fickle braines are so,
'That at the first sight of every wight their plighted vowes forgo.'

The following sea-song, by pirates, is perhaps the oldest of the kind in English.

'Lustely, lustely, lustely let us saile forthe,
'The winde trim doth serve us, it blowes from the north.
'All thinges we have ready and nothing we want.
'To furnish our ship that rideth hereby;
'Victals and weapons thei be nothing skant,
'Like worthie mariners ourselves we will trie.
'Lustely, lustely, &c.

'Her flagges be new trimmed set flanting alofte,
'Our ship for swift swimmyng, oh, she doeth excell:

'Wee feare no enemies, we have escaped them ofte:
'Of all ships that swimmeth she beareth the bell.
'Lustely, lustely, &c.

'And here is a maister excelleth in skill,
'And our maisters mate he is not to seeke;
'And here is a boteswaine will do his good will,
'And here is a ship boye, we never had leeke.
'Lustely, lustely, &c.

'If Fortune then faile not, and our next voiage prove,
'Wee will returne merely and make good cheare,
'And holde all together as friends linkt in love,
'The cannes shal be filled with wine ale and beere.
'Lustely, lustely, &c.'

This song, and another by the Tinkers in the opening, with the proverbial burden,

'Haie tistie tostie Tinkers, good fellowes they bee,
'In stopping of one hole thei use to make three,'

are the best parts of the whole performance, judging from the fragment that is left of the latter song. The dialogues between the lovers are conducted with extraordinary tediousness, and the language of the French Doctor Mountagos, father of Sabia, merely absurd. A female idiot, called Lomia, is likewise introduced for the sake of variety, and to excite laughter at her imbecility.

The 'pretty interlude called *Nice Wanton* *' ought

* The title-page contains these explanatory verses:—

'Wherein ye may see
'Three brainches of an yll tree,
'The mother and her chyldren three,
'Twoo naught, and one godlye.

'Early sharpe that wyll be thorne,
'Soone yll that wyll be naught:

not to be passed over, although it presents no very remarkable feature beyond the circumstance, that some of the principal characters are meant to represent persons, and are not merely symbolical abstractions. Xantipe is a foolish mother (and of course a scold) who spoils two of her children, Ismael and Dalila, but treats her son Barnabas with great severity, and compels him to go to school, while his brother and sister play truant. The result is, that Barnabas is well educated and kept in good control, while the two others, as they grow up, (which they do in the course of the short piece,) abandon themselves to the highest crimes and grossest vices. They fall into the hands of Iniquity, the Vice, and he is a very able instructor of very apt scholars. Ismael, after losing all he has at dice, takes to the highway, commits a robbery, and is hanged in chains: Dalila becomes a prostitute, and after severe sufferings dies of the loathsome diseases to which, by her way of life, she had been exposed. Barnabas, on the contrary, lives in great credit, and in the end is highly rewarded for his virtues. Before she dies, Dalila crawls to her brother Barnabas, and he does not recognize her: the avowal of her name is prettily managed where she says,

'To be restored to health, alas, it is past,
'Disease hath brought me into such decay:

'To be naught better unborne,'
'Better unfed than naughtely taught.'

At the bottom of the page is the date Anno Domini MDLX.; but the printer's name is in the colophon: 'Imprinted at London, in Paules Churche yearde, at the Sygne of the Swane, by John Kyng.'

'Helpe me with your almose while my life doth laste,
'That like a wretch as I am I may go my way.
'*Barnabas.* Shewe me your name, sister, I you pray,
'And I wyll helpe you now at your nede:
'Both body and soule wyl I fede.
'*Dalila.* You have named me already, if I durst be so bold.
'Your sister Dalila—that wretch I am.'

Ismael undergoes a regular trial before 'Daniel the Judge' for his crimes, and the questor jury deliver in their verdict, in consequence of which he is executed. Iniquity is carried off to be hanged at the same time, after a struggle and threatening to 'lay his brawling-iron' on the face of any one who endeavours to secure him. Worldly-shame (the only strictly allegorical character, independent of the Vice, in the piece) then torments Xantipe the mother, and she attempts, in despair, to stab herself, but is prevented by her son Barnabas, who ends the performance with a long discourse upon the education of children.

'A yonge plant ye may platte and bowe as ye wyll;
'Where it groweth strong, there wyll it abyde styll.'

A marginal note informs us that 'he kneleth downe' while he delivers the prayer-epilogue for the Queen, nobility, and commonalty.

INTERLUDES.

THE PARDONER, FRIAR, CURATE AND NEIGHBOUR PRATT—THE FOUR P's—JOHN, TIB, AND SIR JOHN—PLAY OF THE WEATHER—WIT AND FOLLY—GENTLENESS AND NOBILITY—THERSYTES—ROBIN CONSCIENCE—BEAUTY AND GOOD PROPERTIES OF WOMEN.

JOHN HEYWOOD's dramatic productions almost form a class by themselves: they are neither Miracle-plays nor Moral-plays, but what may be properly and strictly called Interludes; a species of writing of which he has a claim to be considered the inventor, although the term 'interlude' was applied generally to theatrical productions in the reign of Edward IV.*

* I have already had occasion to quote from the valuable MS. in the possession of J. H. Bright, Esq., which contains various songs by John Heywood, that have never been printed. One of his contemporaries was a person of the name of Thomas Pridioxe or Prideaux, and I cannot refrain from here inserting a specimen of the writings of that hitherto unknown poet, more especially as I suspect it to be the original ballad which gave the name of 'Queen Dido' to a very celebrated tune, often employed by the authors of songs in the reign of Elizabeth. Dido is supposed to deliver the following verses after she has been forsaken by Æneas—

'Behowide of pensyfnes the pycture here in place;
'Beholde myne eyes whose teres do moyst my paled face.
'Beholde myne eres denyde of there desyryd solas,
'Beholde my playnts to fyll my mornyng hevy case.
'I Dido, quene of Carthage cooste,
'For Eneas love my life have lost.

The earliest of his pieces is, probably, 'A mery 'Play betwene the Pardoner and the frere, the curate 'and neybour Pratte*,' which was printed by William Rastell, in 1533, but which must have been written before 1521, (when the author was a 'player on the virginals' in the court of Henry VIII.) because Leo X. is spoken of in it as living. This circumstance

'My fame, my love, my sealfe I gave into his hand,
'My kingdome and my welth at his owne heast did stand;
'Yet promis nor desartes cowld dinde his hart in troths band,
'But fled, alas, fro me by nyght out of my land.
'Forgettyng all respects of trothe,
'He falsté his honor and his othe.

'As the whyte swan dothe singe towards her dieng day,
'And as the turtle tru her mone doth make alwaye,
'So I pore Dido do my myseries here bewraye,
'And with my death my dolefull desteny display.
'O lawles love, no hearbe is fownd
'To salve the sore where thow dost woond.

'O worthy women all, of hye and lowe degre,
'A merror Dido make Eneas love to flee;
'Trust not men's words, or teares, which most tymes deceiptfull be,
'And ar, alas, the bayts that breeds our misserie.
'Sufficeth for my love I die,
'That you may live and learne thereby.

'O, rockie, ruthlesse harts, your owne with spite to spill!
'O cursscd, crewell men, how can you worke such ill!
'O dolfull deepe despaier, ringe out my carefull ends knill:
'Welcome to me, sweete death, to me my grave is my wyll!
'I came of earth, and wilbe thyne,
'By trayne of hym whom I thought myne.

'Finis. THOMAS PRIDIOXE.'

* This is the whole of the title, which is at the top of the first page: the colophon is this:—'Imprynted by Wyllyam Rastell, the v day of Apryll, the yere of our lorde M.CCCCCXXX.III.' Dr. Dibdin (Typ. Ant. iii. 376) calls the size 4to, but it is small folio.

carries back Heywood's authorship to an earlier date than has yet been assigned to it. The plot is merely this:—A Pardoner and a Friar have each obtained leave of the Curate to use his church—the one for the exhibition of his relics, and the other for the delivery of a sermon, the object of both being the same, that of procuring money. The Friar arrives first, and is about to commence his discourse, when the Pardoner enters and disturbs him: each is desirous of being heard, and after many vain attempts by force of lungs, they proceed to force of arms, kicking and cuffing each other unmercifully. The Curate, called by the disturbance in his church, endeavours, without avail, to part the combatants: he, therefore, calls in neighbour Pratte to his assistance, and while the Curate seizes the Friar, Pratte undertakes to deal with the Pardoner, in order that they may set them in the stocks. It turns out that both the Friar and the Pardoner are too much for their assailants; and the latter, after a sound drubbing, are glad to come to a composition, by which the former are allowed quietly to depart.

In the course of the piece the tricks and impositions of both pardoners* and friars are exposed and ridi-

* In the 28 Henry VIII. a Proclamation was published against erroneous writings and books, which contains a paragraph against 'dyvers and sundry light persons called Pardoners,' and states, that 'the money unlawfully by them exacted of the poore innocent people, by 'colour of their indulgences, they spend in ribaldry and carnal vices, 'carrying about with them drabbes, hoores and cutte-purses, to the great 'slander of the realme, and the damage, deceit and impoverishing of 'the King's good lovinge subjects.'

culed: after the Friar has dwelt for some time on the voluntary poverty of his order, he intimates that he is about to make a collection, while his whole sermon is directed against covetousness. The frauds of pardoners are satirised by the preposterous relics the Pardoner displays to excite devotion and obtain contributions. There is humour in the mode in which this is accomplished: the Pardoner says—

'And another holy relyke here may ye see,
'The great too of the holy trynyte;
'And who so ever ones doth it in his mouthe take,
'He shall never be dysseasyd with the tothe ake....
'And here is of our Lady al relyke full good,
'Her bongrace, which she ware with her French hode,
'Whan she wente oute al wayes for sonne bornynge....
'Here is another relyke, eke a precyous one,
'Of all helowes the blessyd jaw bone,
'Which relyke without any fayle
'Agaynst poyson chefely doth prevayle.'

This exhibition of the great toe of the Trinity, of the bongrace and French hood of the Virgin (both parts of apparel worn at that day,) and the jaw-bone of all the saints in the Calendar, were lively and laughable inventions*. The Friar, the Pardoner, and the Curate, deal in the most furious oaths, and Neighbour Pratte is the only decently spoken man of the party.

When Warton says of Heywood, that 'his co-

* Heywood and his audience were so well pleased with two of these relics, the great toe and the jaw-bone, that he employed them again upon similar service in his *Four P's*.

medies are destitute of plot, humour or character*,' he certainly does not do him justice, whether his productions be considered by themselves, or in connexion with the dull, dreary allegories by which they were preceded. As to plot, it must be recollected that none of them occupy much more than about the space allowed to a single act of a comedy: they were intended to fill merrily a short interval. The humour of the pieces can only be judged of by a perusal of them, and to me it seems that there is a great deal of broad fun in his 'play called *The Four Ps*,' which is reprinted in all the editions of *Dodsley's Old Plays*†, and regarding which it is not necessary, therefore, to enter into any minute investigation. The story there, of the descent of the Pardoner to the infernal regions, his interview with Lucifer, and the joy of the devils at getting rid of the woman he came to deliver, are highly ludicrous. The question at issue, between the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, and the Pedlar, is, which shall tell the greatest lie; and the determination that the Palmer's simple assertion, that he never saw a woman out of patience in his life, is the most monstrous falsehood of all, (which the other three, taken by surprise, involuntarily declare,) is an unexpected and very comic turn in the performance. *The Four Ps* was printed by William Myddleton without date, but no work with a date came from his press before 1543, nor subsequent to 1547: it seems to have been written from

* Hist. Engl. Poet., iii. 372. † Vol. i. p. 51.

twelve to perhaps fifteen years before it was published. Warton made some great blunders regarding Heywood's productions, attributing to him *The Pinner of Wakefield*, which was written at least fifty years afterwards, and *Philotas*, 'ane verie excellent and delectable Treatise,' printed in Scotland. The dialogue, *Of Gentylnes and Nobylyte*, which in one place he assigns to Heywood, in another part of the same volume he gives to Rastell*. ''

The '*mery Play between Johan the husbande, Tyb his wife, and Syr Jhan the preest*†,' certainly deserves the epithet applied to it on the title-page: it is 'a merry play,' resembling in its structure and composition a one-act farce. Johan is a hen-pecked husband, who, in the absence of his wife, pretends to be complete master at home; and as she is out of the way at the commencement of the performance, he threatens vehemently to beat her on her return. She unexpectedly enters, overhears him, and demands whom he intends to beat?

'*Johan.* Who, I, Tyb? None, so God me save.
'*Tyb.* Yes: I harde thee say thou woldest one bete.
'*Johan.* Mary, wife, it was stokfysshe in Temmes-
'strete,
'Which wyll be good meate agaynst lente.'

Tyb complains of sickness, which Johan attributes to her having been, as usual, drinking with Sir Jhan,

* Vide Hist. Engl. Poet. vol. iii. pages 190 and 373, edit. 8vo.

† Colophon. 'Imprynted by Wyllyam Rastell the xii day of February, the yere of our Lord Mccccc and xxxiij. *Cum privilegio.*' Folio.

the priest: she afterwards tells him that she, her gossip Margery, a neighbour's daughter, and Sir Jhan, had made a pie, which she produces, having brought it home with her. Johan is ordered out to invite the priest to supper, and he is not without violent suspicions that his wife has been playing him false with Sir Jhan: he is obliged, however, to obey; and when the priest arrives, Johan is sent for water, under pretence that they are desirous of washing their hands before they begin upon the pie. While he is gone, it is rendered pretty clear on what sort of terms Tyb and Sir Jhan stand with respect to each other, and they laugh heartily at the 'mocks, fables and nyfyls' which the poor husband had been made to believe. Johan returns, having found that the pail would not hold water: he is supplied with wax to mend it, and while he is thus busily employed, Tyb and the Priest eat up the whole of the pie, without attending to the poor husband's remonstrances, and he not daring to maintain boldly his right to a share of it. At last Johan is out of patience, and throws down the pail in a passion, upon which Tyb and her priestly paramour fall upon him, and after making the blood 'ronne about his erys' they quit the scene together Johan fancies that he has compelled them to escape. but it rather suddenly comes into his head that they have gone out 'to make hym a cokwolde:' he therefore follows them with speed 'to se yf they do him any vylany,' and so the piece ends.

Faulty as this production may be in many respects,

it has surely more 'plot, humour and character,' and has more resemblance to real life, than all that went before it, and a great deal that came after it.

In another of Heywood's dramatic productions he had a very different object in view, than the mere amusement of the spectators: it was written to enforce and illustrate a point of natural philosophy, and under the name of Jupiter to vindicate Providence in the course and distribution of the seasons. It is called *The Play of the Weather*, and it was printed in 1533 *. The conduct of the piece is this:—Phœbus, Saturn, Æolus and Phœbe, complain to Jupiter that whatever is done by the one is counteracted by the other: thus the frost of Saturn is melted by the rays of Phœbus; the rain, supposed to be occasioned by Phœbe, destroys both heat and frost, while Æolus 'suffereth neyther sone-shyne, rayne, nor snow.' All three are therefore equally incensed against him; and appeal being made to Jupiter, he summons before him persons of every class, in order that they may state their wishes and grievances on the subject of the weather. This summons is conveyed by Merry Report, 'the Vice,' a character introduced into no other production by Heywood. The Gentleman, the Merchant, the Ranger, the Water-Miller, the Wind-miller, the Gentlewoman and the Launder, all require different kinds of weather, according to their several

* With this title: 'The play of the Wether. A new and a very 'mery enterlude of all maner of Wethers: made by John Heywood, '1533.' Folio. B. l.

employments: to these is added 'a boy, the best that can play,' who wishes for frost and snow, that he may catch birds and make snow-balls. Jupiter, unable to satisfy all at the same time, undertakes to comply with their several requests in turn, according to the seasons; and he afterwards, in the following manner, endeavours to show them the justice and policy of his decision.

'Now, on the tother syde, yf we had graunted
'The full of some one sewt and no mo,
'And from all the rest the wether had forbyd,
'Yet who so hadde obtayned had wonne his owne wo:
'There is no one craft that can preserve man so,
'But by other craftes, of necessyte,
'He muste have myche parte of his commodyte.
'All to serve at ones, and one destroy a nother,
'Or ellys to serve one and destroy all the rest,
'Nother wyll we do the one nor the tother,
'But serve as many or as few as we thynke best;
'And where, or what tyme to serve moste or lest,
'The dyreccyon of that, doutles, shall stande
'Perpetually in the power of our hande.
'Wherfore we wyll the hole worlde to attende
'Eche sort on suche wether as for them doth fall;
'Now one, now other, as lyketh us to sende:
'Who that hath yt ply it, and suer we shall
'So gyde the wether in course to you all,
'That eche wyth other ye shall hole remayne
'In pleasure and plentyfull welth certayne.'

With this decree all profess themselves contented, and the performance ends. If this production be not so laughable as others by the same author, it evinces

a thoughtful and philosophic turn of mind, and makes up for the want of mirth by abundance of useful instruction. It was probably written by Heywood for a court show.

He may also perhaps deserve credit, as the inventor of another species of dramatic entertainment—though dramatic chiefly in the circumstances, that it was conducted in dialogue, and that it was recited in public: it has no story, and is merely a discussion in verse between two or more characters on some particular topic or opinion *. Productions of this kind could never be popular, and it is therefore not surprising that only one of them by him should have descended to us, and that in manuscript. It is in the British Museum, and the point there disputed and argued between John, James and Jerome, (the latter acting as a sort of moderator between the other two,) is whether a fool or a wise man be the happier; and it is singular that William Somer or Summer, the fool of Henry VIII., is often introduced, as an illustration of the advantage of being without understanding and education. The MS. does not seem complete at the beginning, but very little of it can have been lost, beyond the mere introduction to show how the discussion commenced. The whole is in the handwriting of the author, who adopted a peculiar mode

* A performance of this kind is mentioned by Hall, in his Chronicle, (Ann. 18 Henry VIII.) as having taken place before the King and court: he says, 'these two persones plaied a dialog, theffect wherof was whether riches were better than love.'

of spelling, often more uncouth than that of the age in which he lived. From the conclusion it is apparent that the piece had been recited before the King. The following will be a sufficient specimen of the manner in which the argument is maintained on both sides. John remarks,

'I graunt to agre, as ye have defynde,
'That labor of body and labor of mynde,
'That labor or payne of mynde ys the greter:
'And this now grawntyd what be ye the better?
'*James.* So muche the better, and yow so muche the wurs,
'That ye may now put yowr toonge in yowr purs,
'For any woorde in defens yowr toong shall tell.
'After thes my next woordes gyve eare and marke well.
'This labor of myndd, whyche we now agre
'Above labor of body, we must decre
'To joyne foole to the wytty, for possybly
'Cannot the wyttles take parte of that payne.
'*John.* Why?
'*James.* How can he have payne by imagynacyon,
'That lackythe all kynds of consyderacyon,
'And yn all sencys ys so ynsoffycyent,
'That nowght can he thinke in owght y^t^ may be ment? ....
'Thys cawse with wyttles payne of mynde dyspensys;
'But the wytty havynge all vytall sensys
'Hath therby an inwarde clocke, whyche marke who wyll,
'May oftymes go false, but yt never standythe styll;
'The plummets of that clocke come never to grownde:
'Imagynacyon ys watche and gothe so rownde;
'To whyche consyderacyon gyvyt he so quycke eare,
'That in the wytty mynde the restles rest ys there.

'A small wytte may ges, no wone [one] wytte can deme
'How many, or how muche ar there paynes extreme,
'Nor how many contrary kyndes in some one brest.
'Yf ye perceyve this tale ye se yt wytnest
'Thre thyngs, of whyche the fyrst ys, that the wyttles
'Of labor or payne of mynde have reles [release]:
'The seconde ys, that the wytty have in ure
'All paynes of mynde, and that wytt doth that procure:
'Thyrdly I glanset at payne of mynde, alewdyng
'That payne to be most payne. As in for conclewdynge,
'Perceyve ye this?
'*John.* Ye, and grawnt yt trew, to.
'*James.* Then must ye grawnt wytty to have most payne.
'*John.* So I do.
'*James.* Yf wytty have most payne of tweyne, ye must say
'Better to be wyttles then wytty.
'*John.* Nay.
'*James.* I say yes.
'*John.* I say nay, and wyll so envey,
'That I wyll holde your wagger another way.
'As I grawnt wytty of twayne most payne endewre,
'So wyll I prove wytty to have most plesewre;
'Whyche plesewre shall drowne the wyttyest payne,
'And the plesewer yn whyche the wyttles remayne.'

Thus they dispute the matter until Jerome interposes, and just before the close of the dialogue, which would occupy about three-quarters of an hour, James acknowledges himself in the wrong, and that he would rather be

'Sage Salomen then sot Somer, I assewre ye.'

It terminates with four stanzas by way of epilogue, which 'in the Kyng's absens are voyde,' and which

extravagantly laud the wit of his Majesty. 'Amen qd John Heywod' is thus written at the end, to attest the authorship:



Another production of a similar description, but without the subtlety and acuteness displayed by Heywood, was printed by John Rastell, who was perhaps its author, as at the end is the ambiguous colophon, '*Johannes Rastell me fieri fecit.*' It has been assigned to Heywood*, but throughout there is no trace of his hand. It is without date, but a passage in the second part would indicate that, if Rastell were its author, it was not produced until after his conversion from popery by Frith†. Warton, in one place, (Hist. Eng. Poet. iii. 190) without hesitation, ascribes it to Rastell, to whom he also gives another interlude, which I shall notice presently, with the colophon *Johannes Rastell me imprimi fecit*, an expression that includes no claim of authorship. The title of the 'Dialogue' of which Rastell may be the author, is the following — 'Of gentylnes and nobylyte. A dialoge 'betwen the Marchaunt, the Knyght and the Plow-'man, dysputyng who is a verey Gentylman, and who 'is a Noble man, and how men shuld come to aucto-'ryte; compilid in maner of an enterlude, with divers

* British Bibliographer, iv. 270. † Dibdin's Typ. Ant, iii. 82.

'toys and gestis addyd therto to make mery pastyme 'and disport.' A copy of this production, which is a small folio, was formerly in the Garrick Collection, as appears by the MS. Catalogue, which accompanied the plays to the British Museum, but it is not now to be found. It is in two parts, both of considerable length, and the discussion is tediously conducted by the Merchant, the Knight, and the Ploughman, the latter, from first to last, not only having the best of the argument, but inflicting upon his antagonists two sound floggings with a short whip with which he was furnished: the stage direction, '*Et hic verberat eos*, occurs in each part, the Merchant and the Knight taking the castigation patiently. The second part relates chiefly to the reasonableness of the law of inheritance, and the Ploughman quotes Latin to the conviction of his adversaries, who abandon the field in his favour; but return when he has gone out, and in his absence settle the matter their own way. The 'divers toys and gestis' seem only the beatings which the Ploughman bestows; and without going into the serious portion of the dialogue, I shall give a short specimen from the second part, of the manner in which one of these practical jokes is introduced.

'*Knyght.* By goggis swet bodi, thou art a stark knave,
'Noble men and gentylmen so to deprave.
'*Plow*[*man*]. What, thou proud horeson fole, whom dost thou knave?
'I trow, thou woldist a good blowe or two have
'Wyth a good whypstoke to tech the curtesy.

'*Knyght.* Avant, beggerly knave: I the defye.
'*Plow.* What, wylt thou wage battell by and by, now?
'That shall I prove strayght, I make God avowe.
[*Et hic verberat eos.*
'*March* [*ant*]. Kepe the peace, masters: hold your handys for shame.
'To make this besynes ye be gretely to blame.
'Ye wyll dysturb all thys hole company.
'*Plow.* Nay, mary, it is a cause to make them mery:
'To walke such a proude foole is but sport and game.
'*Knyght.* By cokkys body, were not for worldly shame,
'I shuld cut thy fleshe, or elles see thy herte blode.
'*March.* Sir, hold your tong: your wordis be nothing good.
'We lose here, with thys lewyd altercacyon,
'Mych good pastyme and recreacyon.
'*Plow.* Why, what better pastyme her canst thou have,
'Then to here one to call an other knave,
'And see such a proud foole walkyd with a whyp?
'*March.* But I love it not: therfore of felyshyp,
'Leve thys brablyng, and with good argument
'Trye the matter that is most convenyent.'

The epilogue, consisting of eleven stanzas, is spoken by a person called 'the Philosopher,' who thus finally settles the matter in difference.

'Yet I thynke now, under your correccyons,
'The thyng that makyth a gentylman to be
'Ys but vertew and gentyll condycyons,
'Whych as well in pore men oft tymys we se,
'As in men of grete byrth or hye degre;
'And also vycious and churlyssh condycyons
'May be in men borne to grete possessyons. ....

'So vertue is ever the thyng prncypall,
'That gentylnes and noblenes doth insue;
'Then these hedys, rulers, and governours all
'Shuld come therto be cause of theyr vertue,
'And in auctoryte they ought not contynue,
'Except they be good men, dyscrete and wyse,
'And have a love and zele unto justyce.'

This speech is made to the 'Soferayns' present, which was a usual mode of addressing audiences in our elder dramas; but there is nothing to indicate that this dialogue, like the last by Heywood, was recited before the King.

An anonymous interlude, of a different character, written in 1537, though not printed until many years afterwards, and the hero of which is named Thersites, deserves especial remark*, as the oldest dramatic

* Mr. Haslewood, who gave an account of this piece in the British Bibliographer, i. 172, hastily concludes that it 'takes precedence of the 'earliest specimen yet known, of an interlude unconnected with scrip-'tural history.' Most of Heywood's Interludes were printed in 1533, four years before Thersytes was performed, according to the date which Mr. Haslewood himself has acutely pointed out, from the circumstance of Prince Edward and his mother being prayed for in the Epilogue. Besides, all the Moral-plays written and represented, from the reign of Henry VI. downwards, were 'unconnected with scriptural history.' The title is as follows:—'A new Enterlude called Thersytes. Thys 'Enterlude folowynge dothe declare how that the greatest boesters 'are not the greatest doers;' and the colophon is this:—'Imprinted 'at London, by John Tysdale, and are to be solde at hys shop in the 'upper ende of Lombarde strete in Alhallowes church yarde, neare 'untoo grace church.' 4to. b. l. It has no date, but Tysdale printed between 1550 and 1563. Kirkman included it in his list of plays at

performance extant, in which a historical character (independent of Scripture personages) is introduced; although the events in which he is engaged are mere ridiculous burlesque, and have no connection whatever with history. Thersites enters as just returned from the siege of Troy, but nearly all the allusions and illustrations are from the times and country of the author: the hero talks of Cotswold-hills, of Wales, Kent, King Arthur, and his knights of the round table, and expresses his resolution to walk through London in spite of all opposition from the civic authorities. The plot (if such it may be called) is simple; and quite as much absurdity, for the sake of raising laughter, has been introduced, as could well be brought into so small a compass. It appears, that Thersites having lost his armour at the siege of Troy, applies to Mulciber to forge him a new suit, and a colloquy of equivoque, the oldest on our stage, takes place between them on the word sallet, by which Thersites means a helmet, and Vulcan perseveres in understanding a sallad:—

'*Thersites.* Nowe I pray to Jupiter that thou dye a cuckolde.
'I meane a sallet with whiche men do fyght.
'*Mulciber.* It is a small tastinge of a mannes mighte
'That he shoulde for any matter
'Fyght with a fewe herbes in a platter.
'No greate laude shoulde folowe that victorye.

the end of the reprint of *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, 1661, which is the earliest notice of its existence; but no copy of *Thersytes* came to light until a few years ago.

'*Thersites.* Goddes passion, Mulciber, where is thy wit and memory?

'I wolde have a sallet made of stele.

'*Mulciber.* Whye, syr, in youre stomacke longe you shall it fele,

'For stele is harde for to digest.'

This dialogue, and more of the same sort before Vulcan can be made to comprehend, occurs in the smithy; for the stage-direction says, that the smith 'must have a shop made in the place.' After Thersites is furnished with an habergeon, he exclaims—

'Now have at the lyons on cotsolde!*

'I wyll neyther spare nor for heate nor for colde.

'Where art thou, King Arthur, and the knightes of the round table?'

of whom he enumerates 'Gawyn the curtesse,' 'Cay the crabbed,' Lancelot of the Lake, &c. He dares them to the fight, and is provided with a sword that will pare iron. His mother, deceived by his boasting, in vain endeavours to pacify him and to moderate his savage fury, to which, among other things, he replies, by the following blundering reference to Robinhood and Little John, with whom he declares he wishes to contend.

'Where is Robin John and little hode?

'Approche hyther quickely, if ye thinke it good:

'I wyll teache suche outlawes, with Chrystes curses, How they take hereafter awaye abbotes purses.'

The confusion in the first line, supposed to be occa-

* Cotswold lions are proverbially sheep.

sioned by the recklessness of his rage, is pleasantly imagined. Thersites subsequently mentions Friar Tuck, in the course of a contest between him and a snail, which, after some fearful deliberation, he attacks with club and sword, and which is finally compelled to draw in its horns. A new personage then enters, called 'Miles, a knyght,' in the *dramatis personæ*, and in the scene 'a pore soldiour come of late from Calice,' from whom Thersites precipitately makes his escape to his mother. Telemachus, a child troubled with worms, arrives with a letter from Ulysses to the mother of Thersites, soliciting a remedy: for the cure of Telemachus, a charm is subsequently given, but it is difficult now to understand the humour of this part of the piece, which perhaps had some temporary application. The conclusion (independent of the epilogue) is the re-entrance of Miles, from whom Thersites again flies, leaving his club and sword behind him as trophies for his antagonist.

This piece may be looked upon partly as an imitation and partly as an improvement upon Heywood, the improvement relating not to language, nor indeed to construction, farther than as Thersytes makes an approach, though distant, to a better species of composition.

I have been fortunate enough to obtain a considerable fragment of an interlude, of which some indistinct and incorrect notices are found in lists of dramatic performances. The title given to it, and perhaps the correct one, is *Robin Conscience*, and it seems to have

consisted of three dialogues between the hero, the representative of Conscience in the human mind, his father who is a personification of Covetousness, his mother called New-guise, and his sister named Proud-beauty. It was, in fact, a moral lecture against avarice, novelty and vanity, conducted dramatically; but it is a matter of doubt, judging from the extant specimen, whether it ever was acted, or was intended by the author for representation. Whenever it has been spoken of, however, it has been called an interlude, and on this account, as well as from the extreme rarity of the piece, no part of which appears to have been seen for the last one hundred and fifty years, I shall give a few brief quotations from the portion in my hands, which is the part of the discussion between Robin Conscience and his father Covetousness, who is represented as a rich farmer, desirous of engrossing all the property of his neighbours.

As to the date when it was printed, nothing can be decided with certainty. The 'second book of Robyn Conscience' seems to have been entered with the Stationers Company on August 3d, 1579; but I apprehend that the first book, that of which a fragment has been recovered, is considerably older: it was probably written soon after the Reformation, as Covetousness is a Roman Catholic, and calls his son Robin, who gives him such good advice, 'a heretic,' which was still deemed an opprobrious term. I should be inclined to fix both the authorship and the printing

of the production very early in the reign of Elizabeth, if not that of Edward VI. If it appeared in the latter reign, its rarity may be accounted for, by supposing it one of the pieces forbidden or destroyed in the time of Mary, because it favoured what was called 'the new doctrine.' That it was never performed I infer, not merely from the general turn and tone of the dialogue, but from the form of the stanza, each of which ends with a set burden, which in recitation would have been wearisomely monotonous. Robin has been arguing against the wickedness of extortion and the folly of ambition, and Covetousness thus replies:—

'*Father.*

'What Robin, my thynke, thou hast lytle wyt:
'Doest thou thinke skorne, to come to promocion?
'For to marye with gentilles, I trow, it is fyt,
'Havyng with them of monye a good porcion;
'What though it be gotten by crafte or extorcion,
'By the masse, it is all my delyght and pleasor
'To have here aboundaunce of worldly treasor *.

'*Robin.*

'By extorcion, father? mary, God it forfende,
'That any Christen man therein should delight;
'Father, geve me no stoolen goodes my welth to amende,
'Onles I do live by the poore mans ryght,
'As I feare that some doth, both Lord and knyght.
'Wherfore, good father, in time here repent,
'And have a respecte unto Christes testament.

* There are marginal notes, and opposite to the last lines of this stanza are the words 'Be ware of extorcion.'

'*Father.*

'Ah Robin, I perceve nowe, so God me save,
'That thou wyltbe but a meane gentilman,
'Seyng you be suche a concinable knave.*
'Go seke thou thy livinge, where that thou can.
'Tusshe, what care I, though the people me ban,
'By the masse, it is all my delight and pleasor
'To have here a boundance of worldly treasor.'

Robin warns his father against Mammon and the seven deadly sins; but Covetousness replies, that if he followed this advice or the gospel, he might 'chance to lie in his hood' without the means of support. The son proceeds—

'*Robin.*

'Father, you have ynough, yf you have not to muche.
'This I dare be bolde here to a vowe,
'You have ten tymes more grounde, and money in your hutch,
'Then ever had my granser, you wyll this alowe;
'Yet he kepe a better house than, then ever dyd you.
'Wher fore, good father, amende and repent,
'And have a respecte unto Chrystes testament.

'*Father.*

'Tusshe, Robin, thy talke is folyshe and fonde.
'I knowe thy mynde, what thou goest about:
'Thou woldest have me, to live only by my londe,
'And to kepe open house for every jacke lout.
'No, I wyll feaste none but the roufflinge rout;
'For it is all my delyght and pleasor
'To have here obundaunce of worldely treasor.

'*Robin.*

'Father, I wolde have you live, so that god mai be pleased,

* 'A shameles aunswer for a pacient.' In the margin.

'And for your good life God will geve you mede.
'Father, spende your goodes so that the poore may be eased,
'For youre riches be lent you to do suche as nede,
'And not to spende all of the riche, for thy have no nede;
'Wher fore, good father, in tyme yet repent,
'And have a respecte unto Christes testament.

'*Father.*

'Be the masse, Robin, I thinke thou arte made.
'Shulde I feast beggers? mary, fye for shame!
'I dar say it wolde make some gentell man sadde,
'That all riche men shulde have such a name *:
'Yea, I my selfe wyll confesse the same,
'Seynge it is all my delyght and plesore
'To have abundaunce of worldely treasor.'

After the son has argued the point in a very orthodox manner, citing the Scriptures and relying upon the prophets, the father gets quite out of patience, and thus breaks out—

'*Father.*

'What, guppe, Robin, guppe boy, guppe hereticke and fole!
'Now goddes dere curse I geve the and mine.
'Mary, syr, ye have gone to longe to scoole
'A gaynst my ryches and welth to repyn;
'By the masse, yf thou to the scripture incline,
'Be sure that I wyll never do the pleasor,
'Nor yet never helpe the, with none of my treasor †.

'*Robin.*

'O father, father, yet arise up and wake

e

* 'The bred of the nedful is the life of the pore. Eccle. 34.' In the margin.

† 'The rebuke and admonicion of the generacyon of Satan.' In the margin.

'Out of thys slepe of cursed covetous snare.
'God wyllynge, I wyll never Godes worde forsake,
'Nether for you, nor worldlye welfare.
'Good father, now leave here your carpe and care,
'For you have ynough, wherfore be content,
'Onles you be dampned at the daye of iudgement.

'*Father.*

'What dampned, Robin! mary, that were a toye.
'Tusshe, a dewe, farwell, for I must departe.
'Ah, Robin, Robin, thou art a shroud boy,
'For thy wordes pearceth me even to the hart:
'Well, yet I wyll go walke downe unto my cart,
'For nothyng, Robin, but for my pleasor.
'Oh, howe my hart is styll upon worldlye treasor*.

'*Robin.*

'Repent, father, repent, for your goodes is your God:
'Repent, or els you be for ever in a dampnable case.
'Be ware, father, for our Lorde wyll stryke wyth his rod,
'God knoweth how or in what time or space.
'Father, God wyllynge, I wyll home to your place,
'To counsell my mother also to repent,
'For bothe of you be neye voyde of all grace,
'Wherfore applye you in tyme to be penytent.'

We are only left to guess at the result of Robin's 'godly admonition' to his father, who began to exhibit symptoms of repentance; and this part of the interlude is closed by the words '*Finis. Here endeth Robin and his Father.*' With this specimen before us, there is not much to regret in the loss of the remainder of this curiosity, as a literary and dramatic relic †.

* 'Where a mans hart is, there is his God.' In the margin.

† 'It is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

I cannot better conclude this part of the subject, and enter upon the immediate rise of tragedy and comedy, than by a brief review of a dramatic production belonging to the class of interludes, which, at a later date, seems actually to have furnished the materials for a play of greater length and probably variety. We know that it was very early the practice to revive elder pieces with improvements and additions; and such I apprehend was the case with a very scarce drama on '*the beauty and good properties of women, as their vices and evil conditions**,' which Warton, on the strength of the colophon merely, *Johes Rastell me imprimi fecit*, has assigned to that printer as its author†. It was published about 1530, but as late as 1580 we have a notice of its performance in the following quotation from a puritanical tract called *A second and third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters*, printed in that year: 'The nature of their 'comedies are for the most part after one manner of 'nature; like the tragical-comedy of Calistus, wherein 'the baudress, Scelestina, inflamed the maiden Me-'libea with her sorceries.' Such is precisely the subject of the interlude under review, the hero of which is called Calisto, the heroine Melibea, and a procuress

* The title at length is the following:—'A new comodye in 'englyshe, in maner of an enterlude, ryght elygant and full of craft of 'rhetoryk, wherein is shewd and dyscrybyd, as well the bewte and 'good propertes of women, as theyr vycys and evyll cõdiciõs, with a 'morall cõclusion and exhortacyon to vertew,' folio.

† Hist. Eng. Poet., iii. 191.

Celestina*. On its revival, with additions and improvements shortly prior to 1580, the hero's name was probably changed to Calistus, and that of the bawd to Scelestina, as it ought of course properly to be spelt.

The story is simply this:—Calisto, a gay young man, is in love with Melibea, the daughter of Danio, but she dislikes him. By the advice of a parasite, called Sempronio, he engages by gifts old Celestina, who keeps a common brothel, on his side. She endeavours to seduce the heroine into her house to meet Calisto, but failing, pretends that he has a dreadful fit of the tooth-ache, which cannot be cured without the loan of the relic-hallowed girdle of Melibea, aided by the maiden's prayers. Melibea, thus importuned, consents to lend her girdle (which seems to be taken figuratively for a much less innocent concession), and immediately after she has given it, she repents her rashness, confesses her fault to her father, puts up prayers to heaven for assistance and forgiveness, and the performance ends with a moralization and warning to old and young by Danio.

This plot, we see, has no connexion with allegory; but, at the same time, it is not long enough for a play, and could only have been acted as an interlude: as a serious production, therefore, it holds precisely the

* It was very early the subject of a play in Spanish. It was finally extended in that language to twenty-one *Jornadas* or Acts, and was translated into English by Thomas Mabbe, in 1631, folio.

same place in our drama, which those of Heywood fill as comic performances. We are without any other specimen of the kind, and as nothing more than the bare title of the piece has ever been given (and even that incorrectly by Warton), a few characteristic extracts are necessary. Calisto, in despair of gaining the love of Melibea (who confesses in the opening that she has no sufficient reason for disliking him), calls for his lute, that he may endeavour to sing away his melancholy; but he is unable to tune it, and breaks out very naturally,

'Thys lute is out of tune now, as I ges.
'Alas! in tune how shuld I set it,
'When all armony to me discordeth ychе whyt?'

Of age, he says elsewhere strikingly:—

'And age is the hospytal of all maner sykenes,
'The restyng place of all thought unrelevyd,
'The sporte of tyme, past the ende of all quicknes,
'Neybour to deth, a dry stok without swetnes.
'Discomforte, disease, all age alowith;
'A tre without sap, that small charge boweth.'

Without much dramatic propriety, perhaps, the best speech in the whole piece is given to the old procuress Celestina, when she is endeavouring to excite the compassion of Melibea for Calisto.

'Full well, and gracyously the case ye consyder;
'For I never belevyd, that god in vayn
'Wold gyff you such countenance and bewte to gedyr,
'But charyte therwith to releve folk in payn:
'And as god hath gyffyn you, so gyff hym agayn;
'For folks be not made for 'hem self onely,

'For then they shuld lyff lyke bests all rudely;
'Among whych bests, yet some be pyteful.
'The unicorne humblyth hym self to a mayd,
'And a dog in all his power yrefull,
'Let a man fall to ground, his anger is delayd:
'Thus by nature pyte is conveyd.
'The kok, when he skrapith and happith mete to fynd,
'Calleth for his henns; lo, se the gentyll kynde.
'Shuld humayn creaturys, than, be of cruelnes?
'Shuld not they to theyre neybours shew charyte?
'And specyally to them wrappyd in sekenes,
'Than they that may hele theym cause the infirmyte.'

Afterwards she advances nearer, and speaks more plainly of Calisto, and with equal force.'

'By god, and by my soule, in him is no malyncoly.
'With grace indewid, in freedome as Alexandre,
'In strength as Hectour, in countenaunce mery,
'Gracious; envy in hym reynyd never.
'Of noble blod, as thou knowst, and yf ye ever
'Saw him armyd he semeth a seynt George,
'Rather than to be made in naturs forge.
'An angell thou woldist judge him, I make avow.
'The gentyll Narciso was never so fayre,
'That was enamoryd on his own shadow.
'Wherfore, fayre mayde, let thy pyte repayre:
'Let mercy be thy mother, and thou her heyre.
'This knyght, whom I com for, never seasyth,
'But cryeth out of payn, that styll encresyth.'

In contrast with these passages, the following satirical and highly-coloured attack by Sempronio, the parasite, on women, may be taken as some proof of the author's talents in a different style of composition.

'It is a wonder to se theyre dyssemblyng,
'Theyre flatteryng countenaunce, theyre ingratytude,

'Inconstance, fals witnese, faynyd wepyng,
'Theyre vayn glory, and how they can delude;
There folyshnes, theyre jangling not mewde,
'Theyre lecherous lust, and wylenes therfore,
'Whychcrafts, and charmys to make men theyre lore;
'Theyre embawmyng, and theyre unshamfastnes,
'Theyre bawdry, theyre suttelte, and fresh attyryng:
'What trimmyng, what payntyng to make fayrenes,
'Theyre fals intents, and flykkeryng smylyng.
'Therfore, lo, yt is an old sayeng,
'That women be the dyvells netts, and hed of syn,
'And manneys mysery in paradyse dyd begyn.'

There is nothing remarkable in the moral lecture of old Danio at the close. No poetical justice is done to Calisto, nor to his instrument, Celestina, of whom we hear nothing after Melibea has given her girdle, and the piece is wound up by the following lines:—

'Wherfore the eternall god, that raynyth on hye,
'Send his mercifull grace and influens,
'To all govenours, that they circumspectly
'May rule theyr inferiours, by such prudence
'To bryng them to vertew and dew obedyens;
'And that they, and we all by his grete mercy
'May be parteners of hys blessyd glory.
'Amen.'

It will be obvious, that this singular performance brings us to the verge of Tragedy and Comedy.

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY,

THEIR RISE AND PROGRESS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE performance of Moral-plays was not entirely discontinued until the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and one of the last dramatic representations she beheld was a production of that description—*The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality*, played before the Queen, in the forty-third year of her reign. Tragedy and Comedy, as we at present understand the terms, had their birth more than half a century before they gained sufficient strength and maturity to drive their elder rivals finally from the stage. The latter, however, were enabled to keep possession so long, partly by means of the approaches, we have been employed in tracing, to the more popular species of composition, and partly because, under the form of allegorical fiction and abstract character, the writers introduced matter which covertly touched upon public events, popular prejudices, and temporary opinions. To this class belong especially *The Three Ladies* and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies* of London, before noticed, and some pieces, alluded to by Nash and other pamphleteers, which related to the Martin Mar-

prelate controversy, which have not survived the occasion for which they were written.

By Tragedy and Comedy, I mean theatrical productions, the characters in which are either drawn from life, or are intended to represent life, whether those characters be actual or imaginary: the terms include also a species of drama, well known of old in the literature of this country, called 'History,' or 'Chronicle History,' which consisted of certain passages, or events detailed by annalists, put into a dramatic form, often without regard to the course in which they happened; the author sacrificing chronology, situation, and circumstance to the superior object of producing an attractive play. It is the disregard of the trammels of the unities which constitutes our 'romantic drama,' whether the story be real or fictitious; and from the earliest period to the time of Shakespeare, there is not a play in our language in which they are strictly observed. The words 'romantic drama' have reference to form and construction merely, and do not in any respect relate to sentiment or language. In our progress, we shall have occasion to advert to several pieces, such as *Ferrex and Porrex*, *Jocasta*, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, which in some not unimportant particulars of their external shape, are made to imitate the productions of the Greek and Latin stage; but in all of them time, place, and action are more or less disregarded.

If this statement be correct, it follows that our

romantic drama may be said to have had its origin with the origin of Tragedy and Comedy, although it reached perfection only in the hands of Shakespeare, who added to it the luxuriance of poetry and the graces of style: before, however, he began to write for the stage, it was fully formed and completely matured.

Our earliest comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, belongs to the reign of Edward VI., if not to that of his father; but the first historical subject regularly brought upon the stage of this country was *Ferrex and Porrex*, in 1561-2*, and it was followed almost immediately by *Julius Cæsar*, as I apprehend, the earliest instance on record in which events from the Roman history were dramatised in English. The precise nature of this performance, which is only noticed in an old MS. Chronicle (see Annals of the Stage, vol. i. p. 180) cannot be ascertained. Preston's *Cambyses*, already dismissed among Moral-plays, is supposed to have been written about the same date; but it is doubtful whether the last three were not preceded by a tragedy upon

* John Bale, Bishop of Ossory under Edward VI., wrote (as has been already seen by the list of his dramatic works) a religious piece relating to King John's quarrel with the Pope, and another on the two marriages of Henry VIII., perhaps of a similar tendency, and connected with the progress of the Reformation. They have not survived, but probably in no sense of the words could they be considered historical plays. The play upon the romantic incidents of the life of *Robert of Cicily*, acted as early as the reign of Henry VII., and repeated during that of his successor, was, doubtless, conducted like a Miracle-play upon the life of a saint or martyr.

Luigi da Porto's famous novel of *Romeo and Juliet:* Arthur Brooke, in the address 'to the Readers,' before his 'Tragical History' on this subject, printed in 1562, mentions that he had seen 'the same argument lately set forth on stage,' by which we are no doubt to understand the English stage, or he would have specified the contrary, and would not have lamented that he could not deserve the same degree of commendation *. From about this date until shortly after the year 1570, the field, as far as we have the means of judging, seems to have been pretty equally divided between the later Morals and the earlier attempts in Tragedy, Comedy, and History. In some pieces of this date, (as well as subsequently,) we see endeavours made, as has been already shown, to reconcile or combine the two different modes of writing; but Morals afterwards generally gave way, and yielded the victory to a more popular and more intelligible species of performance. The licence to James Burbage and others in 1574, mentions '*comedies, tragedies,* interludes and stage-plays;' and in the act of Common Council against their performance in the

* Malone argued that Shakespeare borrowed his plot chiefly from Arthur Brooke's poem, while Steevens was of opinion that he followed the novel, as translated in *The Palace of Pleasure.* It does not seem to have occurred to these commentators, that our great dramatist may in this, as in other instances, have availed himself of the assistance of earlier stage-poets; and it is highly improbable that a story so interesting and so popular should have remained unadapted to our stage until 1596, when the commentators suppose Shakespeare to have produced the first tragedy on the subject.

city, in the following year, theatrical performances are designated as 'interludes, *tragedies*, *comedies*, and shows;' including much more than the old Miracle-plays, or more recent Moral-plays, which would be embraced by the words 'interludes,' 'shows,' and even 'stage-plays,' but to which the terms 'tragedies' and 'comedies,' found in both instruments, could not be so properly applicable *.

The fact that the taste of the people, about this period, had been weaned in a great degree from the dull abstractions of Moral-plays, and that a new species of dramatic entertainment had been introduced into our public theatres with great success, is proved by a contemporary author, who made himself sufficiently notorious, first as a writer of plays, and subsequently as an enemy of dramatic representations—Stephen Gosson. He published his first attack upon the stage, *The School of Abuse*, in 1579, and two years before it appeared †, he had written 'the comedy of *Captain*

* Nevertheless, in our progress we have seen the terms misapplied, both by the authors of religious plays and of Morals, upon their title-pages. As late as 1578, Thomas Lupton called his Moral of *All for Money*, both a *tragedy* and a *comedy*—a fact which of itself shows the vague notions then attached to the words.

† 'Since my publishing the School of Abuse, two playes of my 'making were brought to the stage: the one was a cast of Italian 'devises, called the comedie of Captain Mario; the other a Moral, 'Praise at Parting. These they very impudentlie affirme to be writ-'ten by me since I had set out my invective against them. I cannot 'denie they were both mine, but they were both penned two yeeres, at 'the least, before I forsook them.' Preface to Gosson's *Plays confuted in five Actions*.

Mario,' (which he calls 'a cast of Italian devises,' and which was probably founded upon some Italian novel,) and a Moral '*Praise at Parting.*' He was also, as he himself admits, the author of an historical play, called *Catiline's Conspiracies*, of which he observes, 'the whole mark I shot at in that work, was to show 'the reward of traitors in Catiline, and the necessary 'government of learned men in the person of Cicero, 'which foresees every danger that is likely to happen, 'and forstals it continually ere it take effect*.' *Cæsar and Pompey*, and *the Fabii* †, are other historical subjects, noticed by him as having been treated by dramatists of that time; to which he adds *Cupid and Psyche*, *The Blacksmith's Daughter*, containing, as he states, 'the treachery of Turks, the honourable 'bounty of a noble mind, and the shining of virtue in

* *School of Abuse*, 1579. Thomas Lodge, in his Answer to Gosson, (of which only one copy, and that without a title-page, is known to exist,) printed very soon after the appearance of the *School of Abuse* in 1579, charges him with being a plagiary, in his drama founded upon the history of Catiline, which Gosson had called 'a pig of his own sow.' 'But '(says Lodge) for the pigg of your own sow (as you terme it) assuredly I 'must discommend your verdit. Tell me, Gosson, was all your owne 'you wrote there? Did you borrow nothing of your neyghbours? Out 'of what book patched you out Cicero's oration? Whence fet you 'Catalin's invective? Thys is one thing *alienam olet lucerna, non tuam;* 'so that your helper may wisely reply upon you with Virgil,

'*Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores.*

'I made the verses, other bear the name.'

† Most likely the identical play performed before Queen Elizabeth, in 1580, under the title (as it stands in the accounts of the Revels of that year) of 'A history of the four Sons of Fabius.' In 1573, a History, called *Quintus Fabius*, had been played before Elizabeth.

'distress,' and *The Jew and Ptolemy*, the subject of which was the 'greediness of worldly chusers, and the 'bloody minds of usurers.'

Gosson admits that from all these pieces useful moral lessons might be drawn, and we are left to infer that they were in verse, (and of course in rhyme, for blank-verse was not known on the public stage until about eight years afterwards,) because he distinguishes 'two *prose* books,' (the names of which he does not furnish,) describing 'how seditious estates with their 'own devices, false friends with their own swords, and 'rebellious commons with their own snares are over-'thrown.' These various dramas were performed either on open stages, temporarily erected in the inn-yards of the Bell-savage and Bull, or at the Theatre and Curtain in Shoreditch, at the Black-friars Play-house, and at St. Paul's School.

About two years after the publication of *The School of Abuse*, in 1579 *, Gosson printed another tract, following up his assault; and here he furnishes an account of the varied sources from which dramatic poets of that day usually drew their plots. In his *Plays confuted in five Actions*, in reply to Lodge, he says, 'I may boldly say it, because I have 'seen it, that *The Palace of Pleasure*, *The Golden 'Ass*, *The Æthiopian History*, *Amadis of France*, 'and *The Round Table*, bawdy comedies in Latin,

* It bears the date of 1579, but it was probably written at the close of 1578, as in 1579 appeared 'a short Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse,' in Gosson's *Ephemerides of Phialo*.

'French, Italian, and Spanish, have been thoroughly 'ransacked to furnish the playhouses in London.' The novels, histories, tales, and plays he thus points out, in fact supplied most of the materials for our romantic drama, which was then beginning to flourish in popular favour *. Farther on he is even more par-

* In the Prologue to his *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, Thomas Heywood gives an enumeration of the vast variety of matters embraced by dramatists in his day; and it is to be recollected that he was a writer for the stage some years before the death of Elizabeth.

'To give content to this most curious age,
'The gods themselves we've brought down to the stage,
'And figur'd them in planets—made even Hell
'Deliver up the Furies, by no spell
'Saving the Muse's rapture. Further we
'Have traffick'd by their help: no history
'We've left unrifled: our pens have been dipt,
'As well in opening each hid manuscript,
'As tracts more vulgar, whether read or sung
'In our domestic or more forreign tongue.
'Of Fairy elves, nymphs of the sea, and land,
'The lawns and groves: no number can be scann'd
'Which we've not given feet to; nay, 'tis known
'That when our Chronicles have barren grown
'Of story, we have all invention stretch'd,
'Div'd low as to the centre, and then reach'd
'Unto the *primum mobile* above
'(Nor 'scap'd things intermediate) for your love.
'These have been acted often; all have past
'Censure, of which some live and some are cast.'

This play was not printed until 1637; but it was unquestionably much older, and perhaps one of its author's early productions: the Epilogue affords evidence, that it was written before the use of rhyme on the public stage had been forgotten:

'We know (and *not long since*) there was a time
'Strong lines were not look'd after, but if *rhime*,
'Oh, then 'twas excellent,' &c.

In

ticular: 'Sometimes (he says) you shall see nothing but 'the adventures of an amorous knight, passing from 'country to country for the love of his lady, encoun- 'tering many a terrible monster, made of brown 'paper, and at his return is so wonderfully changed, 'that he cannot be known but by some posy in his 'tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkerchief, or a 'piece of a cockle shell.' He afterwards adverts to the manner in which historical subjects were handled by poets of his day:—'If a true history be taken in 'hand, it is made like our shadows, longest at the 'rising and falling of the sun, shortest of all at high 'noon; for the poets drive it most commonly unto 'such points, as may best show the majesty of their 'pen in tragical speeches, or set the hearers agog 'with discourses of love, or paint a few anticks to 'fit their owne humors with scoffs and taunts, or 'bring in a shewe to furnish the stage when it is bare: 'when the matter of itself comes short of this, they 'follow the practise of the cobbler, and set their teeth 'to the leather to pull it out.'

Whetstone, the author of *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, (a play on which Shakespeare founded his *Measure for Measure*,) in a complaint he makes against the

In a passage in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612 (quoted by Malone, Shakespeare by Boswell, iii. 41), Heywood speaks of the advantages derived by the ignorant from dramatic *Histories*: he tells us, that they have 'instructed the unlearned,' and asks, 'what man have you now 'of that weak capacity that cannot discourse of any notable thing 'recorded, even from William the Conqueror, nay, from the landing 'of Brute, until this day?'

romantic dramatists of this country *, seems to point at some particular play or plays, which, in his opinion, offended against probability and decorum. The passage in our present view is very curious:—'The Englishman '(says he) in this quality, is most vain, indiscreet, and 'out of order: he first grounds his work on impossi-'bilities; then in three hours runs he through the 'world, marries, gets children, makes children men, 'men to conquer kingdoms, murder monsters, and 'bringeth gods from heaven and fetcheth devils 'from hell. And (that which is worst) their ground 'is not so unperfect as their working indiscreet; not 'weighing, so the people laugh, though they laugh 'them (for their follies) to scorn: many times (to 'make mirth) they make a clown companion with a 'king: in their grave councils they allow the advice 'of fools; yea, they use one order of speech for all 'persons, a gross indecorum; for a crow will ill 'counterfeit the nightingale's sweet voice; even so 'affected speech doth misbecome a clown; for to work 'a comedy kindly, grave old men should instruct, 'young men should show the imperfections of youth, 'strumpets should be lascivious, boys unhappy, and 'clowns should speak disorderly; intermingling all these 'actions in such sort as the grave matter may instruct 'and the pleasant delight: for without this change the 'attention would be small and the liking less.'

To the same point we may quote the authority of Sir Philip Sidney, who is supposed to have written

* In the Dedication of *Promos and Cassandra* to Fleetwood, Recorder of London, and by no means a friend to the stage.

his *Apology of Poetry* (not printed until 1595) about the year 1583, and who objects even to the tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex*, (which he calls *Gorboduc*, as it was sometimes entitled,) that the unities of time and place are disregarded. He was a strenuous advocate for the observance of the rules of the ancients, and goes over the ground which Whetstone, five years before, had travelled, particularly pointing out the total neglect of dramatic propriety. The whole passage must be quoted, as it affords a clear and exact account of the condition and nature of our popular drama previous to the date when it was penned.

'Our tragedies and comedies, not without cause 'cried out against, observing rules neither of honest 'civility, nor skilful poetry, excepting Gorboduc '(again I say of those that I have seen), which not-'withstanding as it is full of stately speeches and well 'sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca 'his style, and as full of notable morality, which it 'doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very 'end of poesy, yet, in truth, it is very defectious in the 'circumstances, which grieves me, because it might 'not remain as an exact model of all tragedies: for 'it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary 'companions of all corporal actions.....But if it be so in 'Gorboduc how much more in all the rest, where you 'shall have Asia of the one side, and Affric of the 'other, and so many other under kingdoms, that the 'player when he comes in must ever begin with telling 'where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived.

'Now you shall have three ladies walk to gather 'flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a 'garden: by and by we hear news of shipwreck in the 'same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not 'for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a 'hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the 'miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; 'while in the mean time two armies fly in, represented 'with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard 'heart will not receive it for a pitched field? Now of 'time they are much more liberal; for ordinary it is 'that two young princes fall in love: after many 'traverses she is got with child, delivered of a fair 'boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is 'ready to get another child, and all this in two hours' 'space: which how absurd it is in sense, even sense 'may imagine, and art hath taught, and all examples 'justified, and at this day the ordinary players in 'Italy will not err in.....

'But they will say, how then shall we set forth a 'story which contains both many places and many 'times? And do they not know that tragedy is tied 'to the laws of poesy, and not of history?—not bound 'to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign 'a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the 'most tragical conveniency? Again, many things 'may be told which cannot be shewed, if they know 'the difference betwixt reporting and representing: 'as for example; I may speak, though I am here, of 'Peru, and in speech digress from that to the de-

'scription of Calecut, but in action I cannot represent 'it without Pacolet's horse. And so was the manner 'the ancients took by some Nuntius to recount things 'done in former time, or other place. Lastly, if they 'will represent a history, they must not (as Horace 'saith) begin *ab ovo*, but they must come to the 'principal point of that one action which they will 'represent. By example this will be best expressed. 'I have a story of young Polydorus, delivered for 'safety's sake with great riches by his father Priamus 'to Polymnestor, King of Thrace, in the Trojan war 'time. He, after some years, hearing of the overthrow 'of Priamus, for to make the treasure his own, mur-'dereth the child: the body of the child is taken up; 'Hecuba, she the same day findeth a sleight to be 'revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where, now, 'would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with 'the delivery of the child? Then should he sail over 'into Thrace and so spend, I know not how many 'years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth 'Euripides? even with the finding of the body, the 'rest leaving to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. 'This needs no further to be enlarged; the dullest 'wit may conceive it. But besides these gross absur-'dities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies 'nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not 'because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the 'clown by head and shoulders* to play a part in ma-

* George Chapman alludes to this species of impropriety in older plays in his *Humorous Days Mirth*, 1599. In the first scene Lemot

jestical matters with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor 'right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragicomedy 'obtained*.'

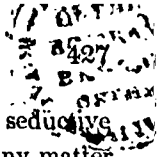
So much with regard to the matter and form of plays, prior to the year 1583, showing, beyond contradiction, that even at that early date they came strictly within the description of romantic drama, which Shakespeare, by some, is supposed to have created. In his *Plays confuted in five Actions*, which, as the reader may remember, was printed shortly before Sir P. Sidney's Apology of Poetry was written, Gosson notices also the style and manner of the composition of dramatic works, in a strain of praise that does not seem justified by anything of that date which has descended to us. I make the following extract in order to show what a rival, but repentant play-poet thought of the language of the dramas of his day; but we must recollect that his argument against the stage required that he should

says—'I will sit like an old king in an *old fashion play*, having his 'wife, his counsel, his children and his fool about him, to whom he will 'sit and point very learnedly as followeth—

'My counsel grave, and you, my noble peers,
'My tender wife, and you, my children dear,
'And thou my fool.'

* On this point, also, the following may be cited from Florio's *First Fruits*, 1591, where the very words of Sir P. Sidney are adopted.

'*G.* After dinner we will go see a play.
'*H.* The plays that they play in England are not right comedies.
'*T.* Yet they do nothing else but play every day.
'*H.* Yea, but they are neither right comedies nor right tragedies.
'*G.* How would you name them then?
'*H.* Representations of histories without any decorum.'



represent its performances as attractive and seductive as possible:—'Thus (he observes) when any matter 'of love is interlarded, though the thing itself be able 'to allure us, yet it is so set out with sweetness of 'words, fitness of epithets, with metaphors, allegories, 'hyperbolies, amphibologies, similitudes, with phrases 'so picked, so pure, so proper, with action so smooth, so 'lively, so wanton, that the poison, creeping on se-'cretly without grief, chokes us at last, and hurleth 'us down in a dead sleep. As the devil hath 'brought in all that poetry can sing, so hath he 'sought out every strain that music is able to pipe, 'and drawn all kind of instruments into that com-'pass, simple and mixed.—For the eye, beside the 'beauty of the houses and the stages, he sendeth in 'garish apparel, masks, vaulting, tumbling, dancing 'of jiggs, galiards, morisces, hobby-horses, shewing 'of juggling casts, nothing forgot that might serve 'to set out the matter with pomp, or ravish the be-'holders with variety of pleasure.'

Sir P. Sidney says nothing of the performance of Miracle-plays in his time; but we know from many other authorities, that while the romantic drama was thus establishing itself, and while Morals were still frequently exhibited, performances founded upon Scripture history continued to be represented. John Northbrooke, 'Minister and preacher of the Word of God,' in his '*Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, vaine Playes or Interluds, &c., are reproved,*' (written prior to 1577, when it was first entered for publication on

the Stationers' books,) violently inveighs against the still prevalent practice of 'handling upon scaffolds 'God's divine mysteries with such unreverentness and 'irreligiousness*.' Thus the three kinds of theatrical representations may be said to have been current at the same time—Miracle-plays, Moral-plays, and romantic dramas. The first, then confined chiefly to country places, were soon generally discontinued: we have no specimen of what may be strictly called a Moral-play subsequent to the demise of Elizabeth†.

On the authority of Whetstone, Gosson, and Sidney, we have thus ascertained the state of our drama until about 1583; and in that year, as has been seen in 'the Annals of the Stage,' the Queen first allowed a public company to act under her name and authority. About this period also the dramatists, who may properly be considered the predecessors of Shakespeare, began to flourish. Lodge, Peele, and Greene had, perhaps, just commenced their career,

* I quote from an edition without date, 'Imprinted by H. Bynneman for George Bishop.' Not having been printed in 1577, the work was again licensed for publication in 1578, and it appeared in 1579.

The author of the *Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters*, 1580, who had himself, like Gosson, been a play-maker, violently inveighs against the performance of what he terms 'spiritual Moralities,' by 'blasphemous players,' p. 103.

† *Lingua*, *Pathomachia*, *The Muses Looking Glass*, and *Microcosmus* (which is expressly called 'a *Moral* Mask'), partake in some considerable degree of the nature of Morals, in the same way that *David and Bethsabe*, *An Alarum for London*, and several others, partake of the nature of Miracles.

and within a very short interval, Marlow, by his example and popularity, produced a very important change in dramatic poetry. Until about 1586, theatrical productions were written chiefly in rhyme, but sometimes in prose; and, as will be shown in a review of the productions of Marlow, he was the first to adopt blank verse on the public stage, and to reject what he calls the 'jigging vein of rhyming mother-wits.' It was also a most striking epoch for our national drama on another account: Shakespeare is supposed to have left Stratford-upon-Avon, and to have come to London 'about the year 1586 or 1587*.' Upon this point it is not possible to go beyond plausible conjecture, but that event cannot be certainly assigned to an earlier date. It has often been remarked, that such of his productions as with the greatest appearance of probability can be named among his first performances, contain evidence of the partiality of his ear, or of that of the public, for the jingle of rhyme, even after Marlow may be said to have accomplished the great change to blank verse.

Malone took laborious pains to establish that Spenser, in that part of his *Tears of the Muses*, 1590, which is devoted to the complaint of Thalia, not only could have no intention to allude to Shakespeare, but that the person he meant to designate was John Lyly, whose earliest dramatic performance bears date in 1584†. In the first part of this proposition I entirely

* Malone's Shakespeare by Boswell, ii. 157.

† Shakespeare by Boswell, ii. 167, *et seq.*

agree, but Malone has failed in establishing at all completely the correctness of the second part of it: the lines in question follow the expression of regret by the comic Muse, that dramatic poetry had declined, and that 'vain toys the vulgar entertained,' instead of

'Fine counterfeisance and unhurtful sport,
'Delight and laughter, deck'd in seemly sort'—

by which it had before been distinguished:—they are these:

'All these, and all that else the comic stage
'With season'd wit and goodly pleasance graced,
'By which man's life in his likest image
'Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;
'And those sweet wits which wont the like to frame,
'Are now despis'd, and made a laughing game.

'And he, the man, whom Nature self had made
'To mock herself, and truth to imitate
'With kindly counter under mimic shade,
'Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late:
'With whom all joy and jolly merriment
'Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

'Instead thereof, scoffing scurrility,
'And scornful folly, with contempt, is crept
'Rolling in rhimes of shameless ribaldry
'Without regard, or due decorum kept:
'Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
'And doth the learned's task upon him take.'

These stanzas I have quoted, because they relate to the condition of the stage prior to the year 1590, when they were published; and my principal reason for dissenting from the notion that John Lyly is here intended, is, that although many, if not all of his plays have

reached us in a much more perfect shape than those of his contemporaries, he by no means merits the high character given of him by a judge so competent as Spenser*: at the same time, it would be difficult to point out any dramatic author, prior to 1590, to whom it would justly

* Malone has indulged in various conjectures as to the poets alluded to in another poem by Spenser, *Colin Clout's come home again*, and he has shown much industry and research in supporting them. Spenser is enumerating, by names real or feigned, the poets of the time in which he flourished. Harpalus (among others), Malone says, means Churchyard—

'There is good Harpalus, now waxen aged
'In faithful service of fair Cynthia.'

But he is decidedly wrong, for Churchyard, as he himself acknowledges, was designated by 'old Palemon:'

'And there is old Palemon, free from spite,
'Whose careful pipe may make the hearer rue;
'Yet he himself may rewed be more right,
'That sung so long until *quite hoarse* he grew.'

These lines, as Malone proves, though erroneously dated in 1591, were written late in 1594, the figure 1 being misprinted for 4; and in 1596, Churchyard, writing his *Pleasant Discourse of Court and Wars*, admits the correctness of the likeness drawn by Spenser. He says that the court is—

'The platform where all poets thrive,
'Save one, *whose voice is hoarse they say;*
'The stage where time away we drive,
'As children in a Pageant play.
'To please the lookers on some time,
'With words, with books in prose or rhyme.'

As 'old Palemon' is Churchyard, of course Harpalus must mean a different man, and possibly, as he had 'waxen aged in faithful service of fair Cynthia,' Lord Buckhurst was intended.

Alabaster is mentioned by name; and Malone, as a great curiosity, published imperfectly two sonnets by him, the only specimens he could recover of his English poetry, which were found in a MS. of Archbishop Sandcroft's, in the Bodleian. I have a MS. containing

apply. Had it not been certain that it was written at so early a date, and that Shakespeare could not then have exhibited his talents and acquired reputation, we should say at once, that it could be meant for no other poet: it reads like a prophetic anticipation, which

seventeen original sonnets, entitled *Devine Meditations, by Mr. Alablaster*, one of which is nearly the same as the first of those printed by Malone: the rest are all different. The main body of the MS. consists of sermons by Dr. Donne, Dr. King, &c., &c.: at the end is a collection of miscellaneous poems, chiefly upon sacred subjects, collected in the reign of James I. I add the following by Alabaster (or Alablaster) 'On St. Augustine's Meditations.'

'When to the closet of thy prayers divine,
'And sacred muse (sweet Austin) I retire,
'My thoughts are ravished with high desire,
'That where I am I cannot well define.
'So leave I th' earth, so I the Heavens confine.—
'The leaves methinks are like Heaven's crystal tire,
'With flames unburned with devotion's fire:
'The words are stars, which beamy letters shine;
'Each chapter parts like a constellat signe,
'Wherein Christ Jesus with his heavenly sire,
'And lovely spirit in chariot seraphine
'Sits mounted on the winged cherubine.
'Austin, where are we? Are the Heavens come nigher,
'Or is my earthly soul aspired higher?'

After his return from Cadiz with Lord Essex, Alabaster became a papist, but soon returned to the Church of England. The subsequent effusion, 'Of his Conversion,' is therefore curious in a biographical point of view.

'Away, fear, with thy projects! no false fire
'Which thou dost make can aught my courage quail,
'Or cause me leward come and strike my sail.
'What if the world do frown at my retire,
'What if denial doth my wish'd desire,
'And purblind pity doth my state bewail,
'And wonder cross itself and free speech rail,
'And greatness take it not a.ld death sue nigher.

could not have been fulfilled by Shakespeare until several years after it was published. While I dissent from the opinion that Lyly was the poet intended by Spenser, I must do justice to the learning and ingenuity Malone has displayed in conducting his argument. The different productions of Lyly are examined elsewhere, and from thence some judgment may be formed to what extent the praise of Spenser was merited. In denying that he was the 'pleasant Willy' of Spenser, I leave out of the question the expression, 'is dead of late,' because, construed with reference to a succeeding stanza of the same poem, it is at least doubtful whether Spenser alludes to the physical demise of the poet he celebrates.

In order to decide who were the precursors of Shakespeare, it is necessary, as nearly as we can, to determine at what date he began to write for the theatre or company to which he attached himself on his arrival in London.

It has generally been thought, and perhaps correctly, that the following were some of the earliest

'Tell, then, my soul, the fear that makes me quake,
'The smould'ring brimstone and the burning lake,
'Life feeding death, ever life devouring,
'Torments not mov'd, unheard, and yet still roaring;
'God lost, hell found, ever, never begun,
'Now bid me into flame from smoke to run.'

I do not pretend to be able to solve the mystery of the last six lines; and of the whole collection we may observe, as Malone said of the two sonnets he discovered, 'the piety is much more obvious than the poetry.'

plays with which Shakespeare had any concern: the three parts of *Henry VI.* (if, indeed, he had anything at all to do with the first part), *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. These five plays are placed, in Malone's chronological list, in the years 1589, 1591, and 1592; and yet, a few pages farther on, he remarks, 'I should name the year 1591 as the 'era when our author *commenced* a writer for the 'stage.' However, this is not the only error or inconsistency into which Malone has fallen; for he mentions, as a proof that Shakespeare had not acquired any reputation before 1591, that Sir P. Sidney's *Apology of Poetry* 'has not the slightest allusion to him;' adding, very truly, that it was not published until 1595. It would have been singular indeed, if Sidney's *Apology of Poetry* had mentioned Shakespeare as a dramatic author, because the writer of it was killed before Zutphen, in the very year in which Malone 'supposed' that our great dramatist came to London, and because most likely it was not written after 1583. If, therefore, Sidney had alluded to Shakespeare as a dramatic poet, three years before he quitted his native town, it could only have been in the miraculous spirit of prophecy; and it is strange that Malone, in his eagerness to support a theory, should never have adverted to the fact, that the premature death of Sidney rendered it impossible that he should have noticed Shakespeare in any of his works. The argument he builds upon the silence of Puttenham in his *Art of English Poesy*, 1589, and of Sir John Harington, in

his *Apology of Poetry*, 1591, is better founded *; but the authority of Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetry*, 1586 (which he also cites), will prove nothing, because it was only in that year, at the earliest, that Shakespeare joined a theatrical company.

Nevertheless, I agree with Malone in thinking that if Shakespeare 'commenced a writer for the stage' in 1591, by the improvement and alteration of the works of earlier dramatists, he did not produce any original drama of his own until 1593; and this opinion will reconcile, if it do not remove, the difficulty that has hitherto presented itself, founded upon Shakespeare's expression in the dedication of his *Venus and Adonis* to Lord Southampton, in 1593—that it was 'the *first* 'heir of his invention.' It might be 'the first heir of 'his invention' in two ways: because it was actually the first poem he ever wrote, and which had been for some years in manuscript; and because the plays upon which he had been engaged until 1593, were not of his 'invention,' but the invention of preceding or con-

* Yet an argument resting upon the silence of contemporaries at best amounts to little. A striking proof of it is to be found in *The Return from Parnassus*, a play printed in 1606, and written about 1602, where, after Marston, Marlow, Ben Jonson, and other dramatists have been mentioned, Shakespeare is thus introduced.

'Who loves Adonis love, or Lucrece rape?
'His sweeter verse contains heart-robbing life,
'Could but a graver subject him content,
'Without love's foolish lazy languishment.'

Here *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Rape of Lucrece* only are spoken of; and it seems asserted positively, and not negatively, as a matter of complaint, that Shakespeare had taken up no 'graver subject' as late as 1602.

temporary poets, on which he had been employed only in making additions.

The supposition that Shakespeare did not become an original dramatic author until 1593, also gives full point to the charge peevishly and enviously brought against him, by Robert Greene, in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592:—'There is an upstart crow, 'beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's 'heart wrapt in a player's hide supposes he is as well 'able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of 'you; and being an absolute *Johannes Fac-totum*, is, 'in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a coun-'try.' Here the words 'upstart crow beautified with our feathers,' clearly mean that Shakespeare, in 1592, had gained reputation by altering and amending the plays of preceding dramatists. Of course, this passage is quoted and remarked upon at length by Malone *, but he does not refer to a curious paragraph, in some manner connected with it, in Chettle's *Kind-heart's Dream*, (which immediately followed the publication of the *Groatsworth of Wit*,) where Greene is thus mentioned: 'He was of singular pleasance, the 'very supporter, and to no man's disgrace be this 'intended, the *only comedian* of a vulgar writer in 'this country.' Greene is thus placed above all his contemporaries, and hence, coupled with what precedes, we may fairly conclude, that to the end of 1592, (for Greene died in September of that year, and both the *Groatsworth of Wit* and *Kind-heart's Dream*

* Shakespeare by Boswell, ii. 304.

were published afterwards, bearing the date of 1592,) Shakespeare had not acquired reputation as an original dramatic poet. It is to be recollected also, that at this date the year 1592 did not terminate until the 25th March, 1593, up to which period, in the opinion of Chettle, confirmed probably by that of the public, Shakespeare was inferior to Greene. Chettle's words, 'the only comedian of a vulgar writer,' do not mean that Greene was an applauded actor, but that he was a comic play-writer of the highest popularity. It is not immaterial also to observe, that in the petition presented to the Privy Council by the Lord Chamberlain's servants in 1596, Shakespeare's name stands fifth, only preceding Kempe, Slye, and Tooley, which serves to show, that even then his station, as an author and an actor, was not by any means prominent.

All dramatic poets, therefore, who had written plays prior to the year 1593, may be fairly considered the predecessors of Shakespeare; and in a subsequent part of this work I have examined the merits and pretensions of all the principal dramatists who enjoy this distinction, and whose productions have been handed down to us. Connected with the general state of the dramatic art, just anterior to the time when Shakespeare became a popular professor of it, there is some curious information in the induction to an old tragedy, called *A Warning for Fair Women*, the plot of which relates to the murder of a London merchant, by his

wife and her paramour, in the year 1573*. From internal evidence, we may decide that it was written shortly before 1590, although it did not come from the press until 1599. Tragedy, History, and Comedy, are there personified, each claiming superiority and possession of the stage: the dialogue between them relates almost solely to the nature of dramatic representations at that date, and is well worth quoting: some particular performances were no doubt pointed at by both Tragedy and Comedy, though it is now impossible to discover them. Tragedy, addressing Comedy, says:—

'I must confess you have some sparks of wit,
'Some odd ends of old jests, scrap'd up together
'To tickle shallow injudicial ears;

* Towards the end of this play is related the following incident, founded upon fact, and intended to prove the utility of theatrical representations.

'A woman that had made away her husband,
'And sitting to behold a tragedy
'At Lynne, a town in Norfolk,
'Acted by players travelling that way,
'Wherein a woman that had murdered hers,
'Was ever haunted with her husband's ghost,
'The passion written by a feeling pen,
'And acted by a good tragedian,
'She was so moved with the sight thereof,
'As she cried out, the play was made by her,
'And openly confess'd her husband's murder.'

This is the same anecdote, employed for the same purpose, by Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612, Book iii. He enters into more particulars, and says that the play was 'the old History of Friar Francis,' and that it was performed by the players of the Earl of Sussex, Lord Chamberlain until his death in 1585.

'Perhaps some puling passion of a lover,
'But slight and childish. What is that to me?
'I must have passions that must move the soul,
'Make the heart heave and throb within the bosom,
'Extorting teares out of the strictest eyes,
'To rack a thought and strain it to his form,
'Untill I rap the senses from their course.
'This is my office.
'*Comedy.* How some damn'd tyrant to obtain a crown,
'Stabs, hangs, impoisons, smothers, cutteth throats,
'And then a Chorus, too, comes howling in,
'And tells us of the worrying of a cat:
'Then of a filthy whining ghost,
'Lapt in some foul sheet, or a leather pilch,
'Comes screaming like a pig half stick'd, and cries
'*Vindicta!* revenge, revenge!
'With that a little rosin flasheth forth,
'Like smoke out of a tobacco-pipe or a boy's squib:
'Then comes in two or three like to drovers,
'With tailors bodkins stabbing one another.
'Is not this trim? is not here goodly things?
'That you should be so much accounted of,
'I would not else.
'*History.* Now, before God, thou'lt make her mad anon,
'Thy jests are like a wisp unto a scold.
'*Comedy.* Why say I could, what care I, History?
'Then shall we have a tragedy indeed;
'Pure purple buskin, blood and murder right.
'*Tragedy.* Thus with your loose and idle similies
'You have abus'd me: but I'll whip you hence:
'I'll scourge and lash you both from off the stage.
[*She whips them.*
''Tis you have kept the Theatres so long,
'Painted in play-bills upon every post,
'That I am scorned of the multitude,

'My name profan'd *: but now I'll reign as Queen,
'In great Apollo's name and all the Muses,
'By virtue of whose Godhead I am sent.
'I charge you to be gone and leave this place.
'*History*. Look, Comedy: I mark'd it not till now,
'The stage is hung with black, and I perceive
'The auditors prepar'd for Tragedy.
'*Comedy*. Nay, then, I see she shall be entertain'd:
'These ornaments beseem not thee and me.
'Then, Tragedy, kill them to-day with sorrow,
'We'll make them laugh with mirthfull jests tomorrow.
'*History*. And, Tragedy, although to day thou reign,
'Tomorrow here I'll domineer again.' [*Exeunt.*

Previous to the time when Shakespeare commenced dramatic poet, it seems that an abuse had crept into theatrical performances, against which Robert Greene remonstrates, in the epistle 'to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities,' prefixed to his *Farewell*

* This complaint on the part of Tragedy, accords with the subsequently expressed sentiments of the author of *The Returne of the Knight of the Post from Hell*, 1606, who claims to have been intimate with T. Nash. The writer of this tract was not T. Dekker, as has been supposed, because in his *Newes from Hell*, 1606, Dekker expressly denies it, and adds that he does not know the author. 'Hence shall it come 'to pass (says this anonymous writer), that the lofty poem, wherein 'the soul of art shall be essentially infused, and the rare amazing pas-'sions of life-stirring tragedies shall be both neglected and unrewarded, 'whilst wanton Clio, in her comic lasciviousness, usurping upon the 'entertain of her ill-judging favourites, shall spread such new fashions 'in the court of men's unconstant affections, that, animated by the 'applause of their enduring sufferance, she shall, like a courtezan of 'the first defiling, by use of evil make men think there is no goodness 'but the evil which so much she boa'eth.'

to Folly, first printed in 1591: I mean quoting Scripture in them, which of course afforded a strong and just argument to the puritanical enemies of the stage. He at the same time speaks with great contempt of some persons, who ignorantly presumed to set themselves up as dramatic poets, or, as he jocosely terms it, as 'the fathers of interludes,' when they were obliged to call in the parish-clerks to assist them in getting through their undertaking. The whole passage was obviously aimed at some individual, but not so distinctly marked out as Shakespeare, when, in the next year, Greene called him 'the only Shake-scene in a country.' Greene's words are these:—'He that cannot write true English without the help 'of clerks of Parish-churches will needs make himself 'the father of interludes. Oh, 'tis a jolly matter, when 'a man hath a familiar style, and can indite a whole 'year and never be beholding to art; but to bring 'Scripture to prove anything he says, and kill it dead 'with a text in a trifling subject of love, I tell you, is 'no small piece of cunning. As for example: two 'lovers on the stage arguing one another of unkindness, his mistress runs over him with this canonical 'sentence, "A man's conscience is a thousand witnesses;" and her knight again excuseth himself with 'that saying of the Apostle, "Love covereth the multitude of sins." I think this was but simple abusing 'of Scripture. In charity, be it spoken, I am persuaded the sexton of St. Giles', without Cripplegate,

'would have been ashamed of such blasphemous 'rhetoric*.'

Most of the authors of the period of which we are speaking were actors also, and it is not easy to find more than a few decided exceptions to the rule. Even Robert Greene, who had perhaps been in holy orders, appears to have performed the part of the Pinner in his own play of *George-a-Green*. John Lyly, who was a writer for the stage prior to 1584, is one of the very small number who does not seem to have been otherwise connected with it. George Peele, who came out at about the same date, there is every reason to suppose, was a player as well as a poet; and the same remark will apply to Christopher Marlow,

* Another abuse of a different kind was mentioned some years afterwards by Heywood, proofs of the existence of which will be found in 'the Annals of the Stage' in the reign of James I., but which seems also to have prevailed at a much earlier date. 'Now, (says Heywood, 'in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612,) to speak of some abuse lately crept 'into the quality, as an inveighing against the State, the Court, the 'Law, the City, and their governments, with the particularising of pri-'vate men's humour, yet alive, noblemen, and others. I know it 'distastes many; neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any 'means excuse it—The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, 'committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates 'to the mouths of children, supposing their juniority to be a privilege 'for any railing, be it never so violent. I could advise all such to 'curbe and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion 'and government.' It has been seen, that about the year 1590, the children of St. Paul's were silenced for meddling with a matter of government and religion, in which ridicule was attempted to be cast upon certain leaders among the Puritans.

regarding whom, however, the evidence is not so distinct. Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle, both notorious before 1593, and who wrote pieces in conjunction, most likely belonged to the same company. Thomas Lodge was probably himself an actor when he wrote his *Defence of Plays* about 1580; and though we have no proof that Thomas Kyd or Thomas Nash were players as well as poets, the inference for the affirmative is strong, especially in the case of the latter. These and more were the predecessors, and some of them the contemporaries of Shakespeare, who began his own career as a performer. Afterwards the instances became more numerous, and the proofs are more positive—Ben Jonson, Heywood, Dekker, Field, Rowley, and many more, were actors as well as dramatic authors.

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY,

THEIR RISE AND PROGRESS.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER—GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE—MISOGONUS—FERREX AND PORREX.

THOSE who have hitherto touched upon the origin and progress of the dramatic literature of this country have concurred with Wright, (the author of *Historia Histrionica*, first published in 1699, and afterwards frequently reprinted,) that 'the first comedy that looks like regular is *Gammer Gurton's Needle;*' but this is decidedly an error.

Warton states in one place that *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was printed in 1551, and in another that it was not written until 1552*. He seems to have had no other evidence than the opinion of Wright, who observes, 'it was writ, I think, in the reign of King Edward VI.:' it could not, however, have been produced so early, because John Still, (afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells,) the author of it, was not born until 1543, and consequently, in 1552, taking Warton's latest date, would only have been nine years old.

* Compare Hist. Eng. Poetry, iii. 205, and iv. 32.

So far we arrive at certainty, but it is impossible to settle the date of the first appearance of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* with accuracy. Malone was of opinion, and with reason, that it was acted at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1566, when Still was in his twenty-third year.

A play has recently been discovered which undoubtedly takes precedence of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* by many years, and which possesses even stronger claims to the designation of a 'regular' comedy. I allude to *Ralph Roister Doister*, which was written by Nicholas Udall; and on the same authority which supplies his name, we know, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the play was in existence in 1551*. Udall died after 1564†, having first been Master of Eton, and afterwards of Westminster schools‡, and it is most likely that *Ralph Roister*

* Thos. Wilson's *Rule of Reason* was first printed by R. Grafton in 1551, and in it a letter of Ralph Roister Doister to his mistress is quoted as 'an example of such doubtful writing, which by reason of 'pointing may have a double sense and contrary meaning, taken out 'of an interlude made by Nicholas Udall.'

† See Annals of the Stage, i. 190.

‡ Warton (H. E. P. iii. 213, 8vo.) thus speaks of Udall. 'Among 'the writings of Udall, a celebrated master of Eton about the year '1540, are recited *plures Comediæ*, and a tragedy *de Papatu*, on the 'papacy, written probably to be acted by his scholars. An extract from 'one of his Comedies may be seen in Wilson's *Logike*. In the ancient 'Consuetudinary, as it is called, of Eton School, the following passage 'occurs:—*Circa festum divi Andreæ ludimagister eligere solet, pro suo 'arbitrio, scenicas fabulas optimas et accommodatissimas, quas pueri*

Doister was the production of comparative youth: if so, the date when it was written might be carried back to the reign of Henry VIII.; and in 1532, Udall was engaged, in conjunction with Leland, in penning a sort of dramatic pageant to celebrate the entrance of Anne Boleyn into London, after her marriage *. Something

'*ferùs natalitiis subsequentibus, non sinè ludorum elegantia, populo* '*spectante, publicè aliquando peragant. Interdum etiam exhibet Anglico* '*sermone contextas fabulas, si quæ habeant acumen et leporem.* That 'is:—about the feast of St. Andrew, the thirtieth day of November, 'the master is accustomed to chuse, according to his own discretion, 'such Latin stage-plays as are most excellent and convenient, which the 'boys are to act in the following Christmas holidays before a public 'audience, and with all the elegance of scenery and ornaments usual 'at the performance of a play. Yet he may sometimes order English 'plays; such at least as are smart and witty.'

* In the Royal MSS., 18 A, LXIV. It is thus entitled:—'Here 'after ensuethe a copie of divers and sundry verses, aswell in Latin as 'in Englishe, devised and made partely by Ihon Leland, and partely 'by Nicholas Vuedale: whereof sum were sette up and some other 'were spoken and pronounced unto the most highe and excellente 'Queene the ladie Anne, wif unto our Soverain lorde King Henry the 'eight, in many goodly and costely pageauntes, exhibited and shewed 'by the mayre and citizens of the famous citie of London.' As a specimen of Udall's part of the performance, the following extravagantly complimentary dialogue may be taken.

'At the litle counduite in Chepe sid was exhibited the Jugemente of 'Paris, in maner and fourme folowing:

'*Mercurie.* Juppiter, this aple unto the hath sent,
'Commaunding in this cause to geve true jugement.
'*Paris.* Juppiter a straunge office hath geven me,
'To juge whiche is fairest of these ladies three.
'*Juno.* All riches and kingdomes bee at my behest:
'Give me the aple, and thou shalt have the best.

like a proof, of its early date is contained in the two following lines from the comedy itself, where a servant of the hero (after whom the play is named) is describing a few of his master's qualifications.

'*Pallas.* Adjuge it to me, and for a kingdome
'I shall geve the incomparable wisedome.
'*Venus.* Preferre me, and I shall rewarde the, Paris,
'With the fairest ladie that on the erthe is.
'*Paris.* I should breke Juppiter's high commaundement,
'If I should for mede or rewarde geve jugement.

'Therfore, ladie Venus, before both these twain,
'Your beautie moche exceding, by my sentence
'Shall win and have this aple. Yet to bee plain,
'Here is the fourthe ladie, now in presence,
'Moste worthie to have it of due congruence,
'As pereles in riches, wit, and beautie,
'Whiche ar but sundrie qualities in you three.
'But for hir worthynes this aple of gold
'Is to symple a rewarde a thousand fold.'

The same point occurs as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth in 1566, in 'an oration made and pronounced by Mr. Pownd of Lincolnes Inne, 'with a maske at the marriage of the Earle of Sussex,' in MSS. Rawlinson Poet. 108, in the Bodleian Library. It was also used, for the same purpose of gratifying the vanity of the maiden queen, at the close of Peele's 'Arrayguement of Paris,' 1584. At this date Elizabeth, never very engaging, was fifty-one years old; but nothing can place her personal vanity in a more ridiculous light, than the following extract from the Registers of the Privy Council, dated 30th July, 1596, when she was twelve years older, and when her ministers, for the second time, were called upon gravely to interpose their authority to put an end to the distribution of unfavourable likenesses of the Queen, offensive to her self-conceit.

'30 July, 1596.

'A warrant to her Majesties Sergeant Painter, and to all publicke 'officers, to yielde him their assistance touching the abuse, committed

'Of songs and balades also he is a maker,
'And that can he as finely doe as Jacke Raker.'

This person is mentioned, as if in his 'songs and ballads' he were not remarkable for his adherence to truth, by Skelton in his satire on Wolsey, *Why come ye not to Court*, and Skelton was dead in 1533. His words are these:—

'What here ye of the lord Dakers?
'He maketh us all Jacke Rakers;
'He says we are but crakers.'

At all events, when Udall wrote *Ralph Roister Doister*, the memory of Jack Raker was still fresh, and we cannot suppose that the reputation of a man, now known only on these two authorities, would be very permanent.

Ralph Roister Doister has fortunately come down to us in a printed shape, although it is now not possible to settle from whose press it issued. In 1566, Thomas Hacket had a licence to print 'a play, intitled *Rauf Ruyster Duster*,' and a copy, perhaps from his press, but without a title-page, (so that the printer's name cannot be ascertained,) was discovered in 1818 *,

'by divers unskillfull artisans, in unseemly and improperly paintinge, 'gravinge, and printinge of hir Majesties person and vysage, to her 'Majesties great offence, and disgrace of that beautyfull and magna-'nimous majesty wherewith God hath blessed her. Requiring them 'to cause all suche to be defaced, and none to be allowed, but such as 'her Majesties Sergeant Paynter shall first have sight of. The mynute 'remayning in the Counsell Chest.'

* What other liberties Hacket took with the text we know not, but he makes one of the characters, Mathew Merrygreek, talk of keeping

and after a limited reprint had been made of it by the Rev. Mr. Briggs, the original was deposited in the library of Eton College *. That such a piece once had existence has been long known, and the allusions to it in later authors afford evidence of its popularity †. On account of the station this comedy ought to hold in our dramatic literature, it will be necessary to examine it with some particularity.

In his *Rule of Reason* Wilson terms this piece 'an

'the *Queen's* peace.' As the comedy was unquestionably written in the time of Henry VIII., or Edward VI., it must have stood in the MS. of Udall, 'the *King's* peace.' Perhaps Hacket composed from some copy of the play, as it was performed early in the reign of Elizabeth, in which the actors had made the change to adapt the dialogue to the period of representation.

* There was a singular propriety in presenting it to Eton College, as Udall had been master of the school. This circumstance was, however, fortuitous, for at the time the reprint was superintended by the reverend gentleman who made the gift, he was ignorant of the name of the author of *Ralph Roister Doister:* he says in the 'Advertisement' —'the book unfortunately wants the title-page, and the author's name is not known.' When the Rev. Dr. Bliss inserted the quotation found in Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, in the new edition of Wood's *Ath. Oxon.*, he was not aware that it was taken from *Ralph Roister Doister.*

† Rafe Roister is a character in Ulpian Fullwell's *Like will to Like*, 1568 and 1587, and a 'roister-doister' is used proverbially by G. Harvey in his *Four Letters*, &c., 1592, for a mad-brained fellow.

'Then *roister-doister* in his oily terms,'

is a line applied to Marston, in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606. The name of Mumblecrust, which is given in *Ralph Roister Doister* to one of the characters, was subsequently employed in Dekker's *Satiromastix*, 1602, and in Chettle's *Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissell*, 1603. It would not be difficult to multiply these references.

interlude,' and in the prologue, of four seven-line stanzas, the author himself calls it a 'comedie or enterlude.' Interlude, at that date, was the ordinary appellation for a dramatic entertainment, so that in employing also the more unusual word 'comedy,' Udall seems to lay in his claim to have his production considered in the light of a play of a more regular and classical construction, referring at the same time to Plautus and Terence, as precedents which he had endeavoured to imitate: he says—

'The wyse poets long time heretofore,
'Under merrie comedies secretes did declare,
'Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
'With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.
'Such to write neither Plautus nor Terence did spare,
'Which among the learned at this day beares the bell:
'These with such other therein dyd excell.

'Our Comedie or Enterlude, which we intende to play,
'Is named Royster Doyster in deede;
'Which against the vayne glorious doth invey,
'Whose humour the roysting sort continually doth feede.
'Thus by your patience we intende to proceade
'In this our Enterlude, by God's leave and grace:
'And here I take my leave for a certain space.'

The scene of this comedy is laid in London, so that in no slight degree it is a representation of the manners of more polished society, exhibiting some of the peculiarities of thinking and acting in the metropolis at the period when it was written: in this respect it has a decided advantage over *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which only pretends to depict the habits of coarse,

rustic life. *Ralph Roister Doister* is divided into acts and scenes, and is one of the earliest productions for the stage which has reached us in a printed shape, with these distinctions: the characters are thirteen, nine male and four female, and the performance could not have been concluded in less time than about two hours and a half, while few of the Morals we have examined would require more than about an hour for their representation: of those that are in two parts, each part, as has been observed, was exhibited on a separate day.

Matthew Merrygreek, a sort of servant, companion, and relative to Ralph Roister Doister, the hero, opens the play and enters singing; and in a soliloquy he explains his own qualities and those of his patron, dwelling especially on the vanity and amorousness of the latter. Ralph Roister Doister joins him, lamenting that God had made him 'such a goodly person,' and that he had fallen in love with Christian Custance, 'the faire woman that supped with us yesternyght,' but whose name he cannot at first remember: she is a gay widow, as Ralph observes, with 'a thousande and more,' to which Merrygreek replies—

'Yea, but learne this one lesson of me afore;
'An hundred pounde of marriage money, doubtlesse,
'Is ever thirtie pounde sterlyng, or somewhat lesse;
'So that her thousande pounde, yf she be thriftie,
'Is much neere aboute two hundred and fiftie.'

Ralph's principal cause of grief is, that he has a

rival in a merchant of the name of Gawin Goodluck, to whom he hears Dame Custance is promised: Matthew consoles him by dilating on the excellence of his figure, which may command the love of any woman, observing that as he passes along the street people admire him, and think him Lancelot du Lake, Guy of Warwick, 'the thirteenth Hercules brother,' Hector of Troy, Goliah, Sampson, Colbrand, 'Brute of the Alie lande,' Alexander the Great, Charlemaine, or the tenth worthy. Ralph swallows all these praises greedily, and promises Matthew a new coat. After they have done talking and Merrygreek has gone out, Madge Mumblecrust, who is spinning, Tibet Talkapace, who is sewing, and Annot Alyface, who is knitting, come upon the stage and converse about the good fare allowed them by their mistress, Dame Christian Custance. They then sing, while Ralph overhears them, after which Alice goes out and returns just as Ralph has kissed the old nurse, Madge, and wishes to kiss Tibet, who is a little coy: Ralph and Madge, being left together, he tells her how much he loves her mistress. Matthew Merrygreek returns with Dobinet Doughty and Harpax, (two other of Ralph Roister Doister's retainers and singing men,) as Ralph is telling Madge 'a great long tale in her eare,' and they pretend for some time to mistake the old nurse for the lady of Roister Doister's love. Ralph is at first very angry, but forgives the blunder upon due submission, and they join in a song upon matrimony, which is appended at the close of the piece, to show,

perhaps, that it might be omitted in the performance. They 'go out singing,' leaving old Madge to give her mistress (who comes in just afterwards) a letter which Ralph had left for her, and which Dame Custance receives, but does not then open. This forms the business of the first act, which is bustling and lively.

A night passes before the second act, in the opening of which Dobinet Doughty brings 'a ring and a token' for Dame Custance from his Master: Dobinet dilates on the hard lives of servants and singers, when their masters are in love—

'So fervent hotte wowyng [wooing] and so farre from wiving,
'I trowe, never was any creature livyng:
'With every woman is he in some loves pang,
'Then up to our lute at midnight, twangledome twang;
'Then twang with our sonets, and twang with our dumps,
'And heyhough! from our heart, as heavy as lead lumpes:
'Then to our recorder with toodleoodle poope,
'As the howlet out of an yvie bushe should hoope.
'Anon to our gitterne, thrumpledum, thrumpledum thrum.
'Of songs, and balades also he is a maker,
'And that can he as finely doe as Jacke Raker.'

Old Madge, having been scolded by her mistress on the preceding day, for taking the letter, refuses to deliver the ring and token; but Truepenny (Dame Custance's man), Tibet, and Annot entering, Dobinet introduces himself to them, as a messenger from their mistress's intended husband, without men-

tioning who that husband is. They are delighted with the prospect of a change in the family, and Tibet Talkapace observes—

'I would it were tomorrowe; for till he resorte,
'Our mistresse, being a widowe, hath small comforte;
'And I hearde our Nourse speake of an husbande to day
'Ready for our mistresse, a riche man and a gay:
'And we shall go in our Frenche hoodes every day,
'In our silke cassocks (I warrant you) freshe and gay;
'In our tricke ferdegews and billiments of golde,
'Brave in our sutes of chaunge seven double folde.
'Then shall ye see Tibet, sirs, treade the mosse so trimme;
'Nay, why sayd I treade? ye shall see hir glide and swimme,
'Not lumperdee, clumperdee, like our spaniel Rig.'

After another song, they almost quarrel which shall deliver Ralph's ring and token to Dame Custance. Tibet snatches them and runs away, while the others go out; and in the next scene we find Dame Custance blaming her and the rest for indiscretion in receiving rings and tokens without knowing from whom they come. Here the second act ends, which is short, and does not much advance the plot.

Matthew Merrygreek is sent in the beginning of Act iii. to see how the land lies, and how the ring and token work. He is brought before Dame Custance, from whom he learns, that she is engaged to Gawin Goodluck, that she will never marry Ralph Roister Doister, and that she has not even read his letter. The following is part of their conversation—

'*C. Custance.* I am promised during my life, that is just.

'*M. Mery.* Mary, so thinketh he, unto him alone.

'*C. Custance.* No creature hath my faith and trouth, but one,

'That is Gawin Goodlucke; and if it be not hee,

'He hath no title this way, what ever he be;

'For I knowe none to whome I have such worde spoken.

'*M. Mery.* Ye know him not you by his letter and token?

'*C. Custance.* In dede true it is that a letter I have,

'But I never reade it yet, as God me save.

'*M. Mery.* Ye a woman, and your letter so long unredde?

'*C. Custance.* Ye may thereby know what hast I have to wedde.

'But now who it is, for my hande, I knowe by gesse.

'*M. Mery.* Ah, well, I say.

'*C. Custance.* It is Roister Doister doubtlesse.

'*M. Mery.* Will ye never leave this dissimulation?

'Ye know hym not.

'*C. Custance.* But by imagination;

'For no man there is but a very dolt and loute,

'That to wowe a widowe woulde so go about.

'He shall never have me hys wife while he doe live.

Merrygreek then returns to his master and 'cousin' with the tidings that Dame Custance will have nothing to say to him, but abuses him for 'a calf, an ass, a block, a lilburn, a hoball, and a lobcock.' Ralph, mortified and disappointed, declares that he will die on the spot; and to carry on the joke Merrygreek pretends that Ralph is really dying, and calls in the parish-clerk, and four servants, to sing and ring a mock

requiem over him. However, Merrygreek recovers his master soon afterwards, and advises him to put a good bold face upon the business, and to go to the Dame himself and demand her hand, making his approaches first by a serenade. Ralph agrees to this plan, and Custance enters while they are singing and playing. Ralph declares his passion, which she scornfully rejects, producing the letter he had sent her, which Merrygreek reads, so neglecting and varying the punctuation, that (as Wilson says in his *Rule of Reason*) it has 'a double sense and contrary meaning;' and Roister Doister, not recognising the composition, denies it to be his. She leaves them, and Merrygreek descants on the weakness and perverseness of women—

'When ye will, they will not; will not ye, then will they.'

He consoles Ralph again by praising his person, and by wishing that he was a woman for his sake: he advises him to 'refrain from Custance a while,' which will soon bring her creeping on her knees to him. Roister Doister consents, and in the mean time vows to take vengeance on the Scrivener whom he had employed to copy fair the letter for him. The Scrivener being sent for, reads it with due observance of the stops, and his employer is compelled to acknowledge that a better epistle for the purpose could not have been penned.

The fourth act introduces us to some new personages. The first is Sim Suresby, who has been sent by his master, Gawin Goodluck, to salute Dame

Custance on his return from a voyage. While they are in conversation, Ralph Roister Doister and Matthew Merrygreek arrive, the former giving loud directions for the preparation of his arms and armour in case he should need them. He impudently calls Dame Custance his 'wife and spouse,' and Sim Suresby goes out, (under the impression that they are married,) to inform his master of what seems to have happened during his absence at sea. Ralph says, just as Sim is departing—

'Yea, farewell, fellow; and tell thy maister, Goodlucke,
'That he commeth to late of thys blossome to plucke.
'Let him keepe him there still, or at least wise make no hast,
'As for his labour hither he shall spende in wast.
'His betters be in place nowe.'

Dame Custance, in grief and anger that he has thus 'stained her name for ever,' calls forth her maids and Truepenny to drive out Ralph and his follower, who prudently and precipitately retreat, but threaten to return. She sends for her friend Tristram Trusty to advise her, and Merrygreek entering, declares that he has only joined with Ralph Roister Doister for the sake of mirth, and to make him ridiculous. He tells them that Ralph is about to return to the assault 'with a sheepe's looke full grim,' and she undertakes 'to pitch a field with her maids' for his reception. In the next scene, which is one of mere broad farce, Ralph Roister Doister, armed with kitchen utensils and a pot-gun, and attended by Mer-

rygreek, Dobinet Doughty, and Harpax, threatens to destroy all with merciless fire and sword. He declares his wrongs to Tristram Trusty, who remarks—

'Well, yet the sheriffe, the justice or constable
'Hir misdemeanour to punishe might be able.
'*R. Royster.* No, sir; I mine owne selfe will, in this present cause,
'Be sheriffe and justice and whole judge of the lawes.
'This matter to amende all officers be I shall,
'Constable, Bailiffe, Sergeant.
'*M. Mery.* And hangman and all.'

The conclusion of this adventure, and of the act, is that Dame Custance and her maids (with the aid of Matthew Merrygreek, who pretends to fight on the side of Ralph, but in the scuffle belabours him soundly) drive off their cowardly assailants at point of the mop and broom.

Gawin Goodluck and his man Sim Suresby commence the fifth act, the latter telling the former what he had witnessed regarding the supposed infidelity of Dame Custance. She arrives, and wishing to welcome Gawin affectionately, he draws back until the matter is explained. She protests her innocence, and refers him to her friend Trusty. Gawin and Sim go out to seek him, and she soliloquizes on the danger and misconstruction to which innocence is exposed:

'O Lorde, how necessarie it is nowe of dayes,
'That eche bodie live uprightly all maner wayes;
'For lette never so little a gappe be open,
'And be sure of this, the worst shall be spoken.
'How innocent stande I in this for deede or thought,
'And yet see what mistrust towardes me it hath wrought.

'But thou, Lorde, knowest all folkes thoughts and eke intents,
'And thou arte the deliverer of all innocentes.'

After she has referred to the manner in which Susannah and Hester were relieved from their perils, Gawin Goodluck and Sim Suresby return with Tristram Trusty, who has satisfactorily explained all the circumstances, and Gawyn receives his betrothed wife with joy. Merrygreek comes with humble suit from Ralph Roister Doister, that what was past should be forgiven, and they consent to take him into favour, Merrygreek observing,

——— 'why, such a foole it is
'As no man for good pastime would forgoe or misse.'

He carries the tidings to Ralph, and still flatters him by assuring him that Gawin and his friends were heartily glad to be reconciled, being in deadly fear for their lives from his vexation and fury. The comedy ends with an invitation of Ralph to the wedding supper, and with an epilogue, which is sung, and in which the performers pray for the Queen, the church, and the nobility. It must have been added when the play was revived, after Elizabeth came to the throne, as it could not have originally belonged to it.

This sketch will show, that in every respect *Ralph Roister Doister* is superior to *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, of which the whole plot relates merely to the loss of a needle, with which an old woman was mending an ignorant and stupid countryman's breeches, which needle is afterwards found by its incommoding the

seat of the person upon whose apparel it had been employed. The characters are all rustics, with the exception perhaps of 'Diccon the Bedlam,' Dr. Rat and the Bailey, and the dialogue is usually in the broadest provincial dialect, not in any respect exhibiting a specimen of the ordinary language of the time. It now and then has humour, but of the coarsest kind, and sometimes points which are pleasant in the outset are rendered absurd by being carried to extremes. Thus the description of Hodge, trying to light a candle by the cat's eyes in the dark, and endeavouring to blow them into a flame, is laughable enough, until he is made to give the alarm of fire, because the animal ran away into the loft. The drinking song which opens the second act * is certainly the best thing in it, and all that Warton could say in favour of the piece as a whole was, that 'the 'writer has a degree of jocularity, which sometimes 'rises above buffoonery, but is often disgraced by low-'ness of incident.'

On the other hand, the plot of *Ralph Roister Doister* is amusing and well constructed, with an agreeable intermixture of serious and comic dialogue, and a variety of character, to which no other piece of a similar date can make any pretension. When we recollect, that it was perhaps written in the reign of Henry VIII., we ought to look upon it as a masterly production. Had it followed *Gammer Gurton's Needle* by as many years as it preceded it, it

* Quoted by Warton at length, H. E. P., iv. 32.

would have been entitled to our admiration on its own separate merits, independent of any comparison with other pieces. The character of Matthew Merrygreek here and there savours a little of the Vice of the Morals, but his humour never depends upon the accidents of dress and accoutrements.

Gammer Gurton's Needle is reprinted in *Dodsley's Old Plays*, and it is also to be found in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama;* it is therefore not necessary to go farther into the general discussion of its merits: for the sake of completeness, however, it is fit to extract a short specimen of the dialogue, that some notion may be formed of Still's language and versification. What follows is from Act ii. Scene 3, 'Diccon the Bedlam' commencing with a short address to the audience, referring to his plot, or device, concerning the lost needle.

'*Diccon.* Ye see, masters, the one end tapt of this my short devise,
'Now must we broche tother to, before the smoke arise;
'And by the time they have a while run, I trust ye need not crave it,
'But loke what lieth in both their harts, ye are like sure to have it.
'*Hodge.* Yea, gogs soul, art alive yet? What, Diccon, dare ich come *?
'*Diccon.* A man is well hied to trust to thee: I wil say nothing but mum:

* Diccon has been pretending to have had an interview with the devil for the recovery of the needle.

'But and ye come any nearer, I pray you, see all be sweete.

'*Hodge.* Tush, man; is gammer's neele found? that chould gladly weete.

'*Diccon.* She may thanke thee it is not found, for if thou had kept thy standing

'The devil he wold have fet it out, evn Hodg at thy commaunding.

'*Hodge.* Gogs hart, and cold he tel nothing wher the neele might be found?

'*Diccon.* Ye foolysh dolt, ye were to seek ear we had got our ground;

'Therfore his tale so doubtfull was, that I cold not perceive it.

'*Hodge.* Then ich se wel somthing was said, chope one day yet to have it.

'But, Diccon, Diccon, did not the devill cry, ho, ho ho?

'*Diccon.* If thou hadst taryed where thou stoodst, thou woldest have said so.

'*Hodge.* Durst swere of a boke chard him rore, streight after ich was gon.

'But tell me, Diccon, what said the knave, let me here it anon.

'*Diccon.* The horson talked to mee, I know not wel of what:

'One whyle his tonge it ran and paltered of a cat;

'Another whyle he stammered styll upon a rat;

'Last of all there was nothing but every word chat, chat.

'But this I well perceyved before I wolde him rid,

'Betweene Chat and the rat and the cat the nedle is hyd.

'Now whether Gyb, our cat, have eate it in her mawe,

'Or doctor Rat, our curat, have found it in the straw,

'Or this dame Chat, your neighbour, have stollen it, god hee knoweth,

'But by the morrow at this time, we shall learn how the matter goeth.

'*Hodge.* Canst not learn to night, man? Seest not what is here?

'[*Pointyng behind to his torne breeches.*

'*Diccon.* Tys not possyble to make it sooner appere.

'*Hodge.* Alas, Diccon, then chave no shyft; but least ich tary to longe,

'Hye me to Sym glovers shop theare to seeke for a thonge,

'Ther with this breech to tatche and tye as ich may.

'*Diccon.* To morrow, Hodg, if we chaunce to meete, shall see what I will say.'

It is perhaps to be regretted that Still did not apply his dramatic talents to a better subject; and I cannot entirely agree with Warton that the many indecencies and grossnesses with which his play abounds arose out of the want of polish of the age. At least *Ralph Roister Doister* is remarkably free from them, and it is doubtful whether in London, in this respect, people were much more refined than in the country. *Gammer Gurton's Needle* has this peculiarity belonging to it, that it is, I believe, the first existing English play acted at either University; and it is a singular coincidence, (which is farther illustrated in 'the Annals of the Stage,') that the author of the comedy so represented should be the very person who many years afterwards, when he had become Vice Chancellor of Cambridge, was called upon to remonstrate with the ministers of Queen Elizabeth against having an English play performed before her at that University, as unbefitting its learning, dignity, and character.

Taking it for granted that *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was acted at Cambridge in 1566, it is tolerably certain

that it was preceded by another production, belonging decidedly to the class of comedy, and which is a MS. of recent discovery. It is called *Misogonus*, and it appears to have been written by a person of the name of Thomas Rychardes, whose name is appended to the prologue. The first page bears the name also of Laurentius Bariωna *, and the date 'Ketheringe Die. 20 Novembris, Anno 1577.' It was unquestionably written many years earlier, as is established, among others, by the following piece of internal evidence. A question arises when one of the principal characters, named Eugenus, was born, and Crito, another person in the play, desires three old women who had been present at the birth, and a countryman, the husband of one of them, 'to lay all their heads together,' in order to decide the point, which is material to the plot: after doing so, the countryman replies—

> 'It were after the *rising rection i'th north*, I remember well;'

in which the others agree, and hence they find that Eugenus was 'twenty and four' years old. The great insurrection in the North occurred in 1536, and, adding twenty-four years, the age of the young man, to that date, it would give 1560 or a little after, as the time when *Misogonus* was first produced. I shall analyse this piece with minuteness, on account of its age, its construction, and its general merits as a drama, independent of the consideration that it has never before been mentioned. It is to be lamented that this

* He seems to have adopted the Italian poet Trissino's peculiarity of using the Greek ω in spelling.

valuable relic is in a very mutilated state, and that the whole of the last act (for it is regularly divided and subdivided) is wanting.

The scene is laid in Italy, and the foundation of the piece was perhaps some Italian novel or play of which Laurentius Bariona might be the author: it represents, however, as usual, the manners of England, and the allusions to circumstances well known at the time it was written are not unfrequent. The characters are twelve in number, and many of the names given to them are of Greek or Latin composition, indicative of the habits and dispositions of the persons: they are so arranged that the comedy could be performed by ten players. One peculiarity presents itself in the very commencement — the prologue was spoken by an actor in the character of Homer, with a wreath of bays round his head *—

'Yow that are here moste excellente, and yow moste honeste auditoures,
'Thinke not I have the lorrell bowes or ivy berryes gotte,
'That I shoulde vaunte my selfe to be like to Apollo's oratoures:
'To speake in breif I thinke it best, of truth I ment it not.
'Yf any ask, then, why I decke my temples thus with bayse,
'Or why this garlande here I ware, not being Laureat,
'Forsooth I come in Homers hewe our historye forth to blase,

* It was not unusual for the speaker of the prologue to wear bays or laurel, and in the accounts of the Revels before Queen Elizabeth we read entries of a charge for 'bays for the prologue.'

'As custome is and ever was: well marke therof the state.'

He then proceeds in the following terms to relate the outline of the plot—

'Whilum there in Laurentum dwelt, a towne of antike fame,
'In Italye a countrey earst renounde with Trojane knightes,
'A gentleman whome lott assinde Philogonus to name:
'Of this man's destinies this tyme our author onely writes.

'In lusty youth a wife he tooke, a dame of florishinge grene,
'Who sone after conceavde and brought him forth at once two twinnes:
'Theldest she sente away, wherof hir husbande did not wene.
'Forthwith she died: at thother sonne our comody begins.

'Through wanton educatione he gann to be contempteous,
'And sticked not with tauntinge tearmes his father to miscall;
'And straightway in lacivious luste he waxed so licentious,
'That father he did often vex, and brought him to great thrall.

'By luckkye lot yet at the lengthe his eldest sonne he knewe,
'And that he might his comforte be, sent for him in great hast:
'Then after this the yonger sonne his life doth leade anewe,
'Withat together all the[y] joy and bankett at the last.'

It will be evident, therefore, that the structure of the piece is simple, and the prologue apologises for 'the rude and homely grace' of the language, as well as for want of practice in the actors.

The comedy opens with a long scene between Philogonus, and his friend and neighbour Eupelas, in which the former relates to the latter his marriage, the birth of a son, and the subsequent death of the mother: he also states the manner in which he had spoiled the boy and neglected his education, until he grew up past correction and instruction, adding

'A company of knaves he hath also on his hande,
'Which leades him to all manner leaudnes apace,
'With harlotts and varlotts and baudes he is mande:
'To the gallouse, I feare, he is treadinge the trace.'

The whole play is in stanzas of this form and measure. Eupelas in his turn comforts his friend, and tells him 'to pluck up his heart' and not to despair, as his son, named Misogonus, would reform in time. He undertakes to reason with the young man on the subject of his misconduct, but Philogonus warns him to be careful how he proceeds in so hopeless an undertaking.

'An endlesse laboure you then go aboute.
'Can you bende a bigge tree which is sappy and sound?
'He is to olde, I tell yow, to stubberne and to stoute:
'Take hede what you say lest he lay you on the ground.'

Eupelas determines to persevere in the attempt to reclaim Misogonus, and while they are yet conversing, Cacurgus (who is described as *Morio* in the list of characters) enters to call his 'founder' to supper.

Cacurgus is the domestic fool of the family, and this drama contains a more distinct representation of the nature and qualities of this sort of personage than is to be found, perhaps, in any of our old plays. Before his master, he usually pretends to be a mere simpleton, and to talk a broad country dialect, but at other times he is full of all kinds of shrewdness, mischief, and waggery. There is another circumstance in his character that deserves remark: although his name is Cacurgus, he is constantly called, and he calls himself, Will Summer, as if the celebrity of the court-fool of Henry VIII. had led to the assignment of his name to domestic fools in private families. The two old gentlemen leave him on the stage, and after a not very decent song, in which he laughs at them, Cacurgus thus addresses himself to the audience.

'Yow may perceive what I am, so much I doe laughe:
'A foole, you knowe, can kepe no measure;
'My master is Waltum, and I Waltum's calfe:
'A foole in laughture puttethe all his pleasure.

'A foole (quoth yow), nay he is no foole.
'Did yow not see what pittye he did take?
'He is able to sett your doctoures to schole;
'No smale poynt of wisdome for me such gere to make.'

He enlarges upon the extravagance and vices of his young master, and ends by giving away the points of his dress among the audience.

'But before I goe hence, Ile bestowe some of my poynts;
'Come of with a vengeaunce! here is prety toyes.
'What Will, what Dick, be hanged, stirr your joynts!
'What, will yow none? take them, then, boyes.

'As for my pinnes, Ile bestowe them of Jone,
'When we sitt by the fier and rost a crabb.
'She and I have good sporte when we are all alone:
'By the mas, I may say to yow, she is an honest drabb.
'Nothinge greves me but my yeares [ears] be so longe,
'My master will take me for Balames asse.
'Yf I can, Ile tye them downe with a thonge,
'Yf not, I will tell him I have [am] good kinge Midas.'

Misogonus then enters blustering, and at first threatens to kill Cacurgus, but they soon get into familiar conversation, and Misogonus tells the fool that he is 'as full of knaverie, as an egge is full of meate.' Cacurgus informs Misogonus how much he is in his master's favour, and that he had heard Philogonus tell Eupelas that his son was 'a parlousse unthriftye ladde.' When Misogonus learns from Cacurgus, that Eupelas was about to take him in hand, he falls into a furious rage, and exclaims

'By his soule and syds, by his death and his life,
'Ile make the olde churle repente this talke.'

Cacurgus proposes, that Misogonus should collect his servants while he sent out Eupelas to them, and that they should then fall upon him. Misogonus calls his man Orgalus, who was busied in brushing his master's 'velvet gaskins.' They stand aside, and when Eupelas enters, they rush out upon him, and the first act ends with the escape of Eupelas.

The second act commences with the abuse by Misogonus of his servant Orgalus, for allowing Eupelas to escape. Oenophilus, another servant, explains, that he could not come in time to assist, because he had been

obliged to leave his 'livery coat' of good 'spanish cloth' in pawn for some 'ginger bowles' he had been drinking with a fellow who had afterwards picked his pocket, and ran away. Misogonus calls him 'a disardly dronkerd and besillinge beast;' and while beating him Cacurgus arrives, and entreats Misogonus to desist 'in the Queen's name,' but receives a blow in reply. Oenophilus acknowledges, that he deserved what had been inflicted upon him, and declares that his master exceeds 'the nine worthies.' Misogonus forgives him, and the more readily, as Oenophilus promises to take him hunting 'two legged venison.'

'*Oen.* Ile bringe ye to a morsell that is tender and dentye:
'She is not so much as my spann in hir wast.
'*Cac.* By the mas, I know hir, she is a good smogly lace;
'She a hundred tymes better than any French rigg.
'*Mis.* Give me thy hand: thoust have a house and bringe this to passe.
'I woulde aske no more of hir but on [one] Scottish gigge.'

Misogonus is in a hurry to be at the sport, but the rest insist upon having a song first, and they sing the following, 'to the tune of hearts ease,' which, recollecting that it was written about the year 1560, may be pronounced quite as good in its kind, as the drinking song in *Gammer Gurton's Needle.*

'Singe care away with sport and playe
'Pastime is all our pleasure:
'Yf well we fare, for nought we care
'In mearth consists our treasure,

'Let lungis* lurke and druges worke,
'We doe defie their slaverye:
'He is but a foole that goes to schole,
'All we delight in braverye.

'What doth't availe farr hence to saile,
'And lead our life in toylinge?
'Or to what end shoulde we here spende
'Our dayes in urksome moylinge?

'It is the best to live at rest,
'And tak't as God doth send it;
'To haunt ech wake and mirth to make,
'And with good fellowes spend it.

'Nothing is worse than a full purse
'To niggards and to pinchers:
'They alwais spare and live in care,
'Ther's no man loves such flinchers.

'The merye man with cupp and cann
'Lives longer then doth twentye:
'The misers wealth doth hurt his health,
'Examples wee have plentye.

'Tza ['Tis a] bestly thinge to lie musinge
'With pensivenes and sorrowe;
'For who can tell that he shall well
'Live here until the morowe.

'We will therfore for evermore
'While this our life is lastinge,
'Ete, drinke, and sleepe, and lemans keepe,
''Tis popery to use fastinge.

'In cards and dice, our comforte lies,
'In sportinge and in dauncinge,
'Our minds to please and live at ease
'And sometimes to use praunsinge.

* *Lungis*, a word used by Ben Jonson and others, is mis-written *Sungis* in the MS.

'With Bes and Nell we love to dwell
'In kissinge and in hakinge;
'But whope hoe, hollie, with trollye lollye,
'To them weil now be walking.'

They leave the fool behind them, who stands aside and speaks to himself, while Liturgus, an honest old servant to Philogonus, relates how Misogonus had treated Eupelas. Cacurgus says, among other things:

'Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I must neds laughe in my slefe:
'The wise men of Gotum are risen againe *.
'Peter Poppum doth make his master beleive
'That Misogonus, his sonne, hath Eupelas slayne.'

When Liturgus has gone out to inquire after the health of Eupelas, Cacurgus comes forward, assuming his character of a rustic simpleton, and from what he says, we may conclude that such was the peculiarity of Will Summer:

'Ha, ha! now will I goe playe Will Sommer agayne,
'And seme as verie a gose as I was before.'

The old gentleman pulls the points off his own hose to give them as a reward to Cacurgus, who calls them 'ding-dongs,' and rejoices that some of them have 'golden noses.' They all go out, when Liturgus brings word that Eupelas is unhurt.

The next scene is a very amusing one, and a very severe satire upon the Roman Catholic priesthood. Misogonus is represented disporting himself with

* According to Hearne (*Guil. Neubr.*, iii. 744), 'The Merry Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham' were published in the latter end of the reign of Henry VIII. They were written by Andrew Borde; but 'the fooles of Gotham' we have seen mentioned in Miracle-plays.

Melissa (*meretrix*), and attended by his servants Orgalus and Oenophilus. After drinking 'muscadine,' the lady proposes 'a cast at the bones;' but, as no dice can be found, Oenophilus suggests that Sir John, the parish-priest, should be sent for, who 'has not a drop of priest's blood in him,' and is sure to be well furnished with cards and dice. He thus gives his character—

'He, Sir? I am sure heis not without a dosin pare of dice.
'I durst jepert [hazard] heis now at cards or at tables:
'A bible, nay soft you, heile yet be more wise;
'I tell yow heis none of this new start up rables.

'Thers no honest pastime but he puts it in sure,
'Not one game can come upp but he has it bith' backe.
'Every wench ith townes acquainted with his lure.
'Its pittye (so god helpe me) that ever he shoulde lacke.'

Oenophilus is dispatched for him, and Cacurgus joins the party, surprised at first to see Misogonus with such 'a fare Mayde Marion,' who is 'as good as brown Bessye.' Oenophilus soon brings Sir John, whom he found 'at the ale-house.' Cacurgus snatches the pack of cards the priest had in his pocket, in order to play at 'ruff mawe or saint,' while the rest of the party take the dice to play at 'Mumchaunce, or Novum come quickly.' Sir John first stakes his gown upon a trick of legerdemain at cards, and the fool wins it; but 'the Vicar' is afterwards so successful with 'the bones,' that they suspect he plays with 'some dise of vauntadge.' His luck, however, changes, and in the midst of his play he hears the

'saunce bell goe ding dong,' and the parish-clerk comes to fetch him to his church. He tells the clerk to do duty himself by saying a *Magnificat* and a *Nunc dimittis*, and ending with the Creed, leaving out the Psalms and the *Paternoster*. Sir John is, however, inclined to go himself when he hears that Susan Sweetlips is waiting for him; but Cacurgus swears 'by tetragrammaton and the blacke santas' he will knock out his brains if he stirs. After some farther gambling they begin dancing 'country dances,' and 'the Vicar of St. Fools,' 'the shaking of the sheets,' and 'catching of quails' are mentioned as three of the tunes. While they are thus engaged, Cacurgus, to make mischief, steals out and brings in Philogonus, Eupelas, and Liturgus to be spectators. An abusing match on all sides follows, Liturgus declaring 'there's no mischeife, as they say commonly, but a priest at one end.' Misogonus and his companions go out at last, leaving Philogonus, Eupelas, and Liturgus on the stage: the two last endeavour in vain to console the unhappy father, and after they have made their exit, he delivers a 'doleful ditty to the tune of Labandoloschote,' of which the following is one stanza—

'Yf Phœbus forst was to lament
'When Phaeton fell from the element;
'Yf Dedalus did wale and wepe
'When Icarus in seas was deape:
'Yf Priamus had cause to crye
'When all his sonnes was slayne in Troy,
'Why should not I then, wofull wight,
'Complain in a more piteous plight;

'Myne doth not only him selfe undoo
'But me full oft doth worke great woo.'

The third act commences with a new character, Custer Codrus, a country tenant to Philogonus, who complains of having lost a sow, and who comes to town with a couple of capons as a Christmas present to his landlord. Cacurgus cheats him of his capons, and substitutes two hens for them, but undertakes to bring him to speak with Philogonus on the promise of 'a fine thing that cam from London* for his paine.' Codrus finds his old landlord in great grief at the misconduct of him whom he imagines to be his only son; Codrus gives Philogonus information that his late wife had produced twins, and that, in fact, he had another son alive: he promises to bring his wife Alison, who was present at the birth, to prove the fact, and Philogonus overjoyed exclaims—

'Ther never was poore mariner amids the surginge seas,
'Catchinge a glimeringe of a port whorunto he would saile,
'So much distract twixt hope of health and feare his life to lease,
'As I even nowe with hope do hange, and eke with feare doe faile.'

* Farther on in the piece an allusion is made to the Weathercock of St. Paul's, which was almost a novelty at the time this play was written, as, according to Stow, it was put up on the 3d of November, 1553. Cacurgus, speaking of Codrus, says, 'that old lyzarde had no more witt then the wethercocke of Poles.' This also is decisive that the piece was written before 1561, in which year the spire of St. Paul's was burnt, and of course the weathercock. See Stow's Chronicle, 1095.

Alison is brought forward: she is a Roman Catholic, and talks of her bead-roll and of saying a *de profundis*, which induces Codrus to remind her that their 'master is of the new learning,' that is to say, of the reformed religion. A long scene follows, in which Philogonus hears it confirmed by Alison that his wife had produced twins, and by the advice of 'a certain learned man,' had sent one of them secretly away into Apolonia, to be brought up by an uncle and aunt. Cacurgus informs Misogonus what has transpired: Misogonus hopes it is 'but a tale of a tub,' but, being informed that Liturgus had been sent into Apolonia for his elder brother, he threatens to 'colefeke*' him for it. He calls upon Cacurgus to advise and assist him, and the fool proposes to steal the deeds of the estates from Philogonus.

Isbel Busby and Madge Caro, who with Alison had been present when the twins were born, are next brought upon the stage. Madge, who stammers, is also troubled with the tooth-ache, and they are encountered by Cacurgus, who pretends to be a great Egyptian, capable of curing all kinds of maladies. He makes a long speech, dilating on his own merits, to which Isbel and Madge listen with wonder, and

* The only other instance of the use of this word that I am at present aware of is in Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*, which was written and played a few years after this piece: Stephano there tells Jack, 'Away, Jackenapes, els I wyll *colpheg* you by and by.' Steevens conjectured that it was a corruption of *colaphize*, box or buffet.

after he has given the latter a mock prescription for her malady, including a 'dram of Venus-hair infidelity and 'an ounce of popery,' he intrigues with them to deny that Misogonus had an elder brother, persuading them that 'a fairy' had changed the child in the cradle. It does not seem that this project succeeds, for in the next scene Eugonus, the lost brother, arrives, and is recognised by Alison, Isbel, and Madge, Isbel declaring, that 'when her maistresse lay in, they sange lulley by baby *.' With the assistance of a person named Crito (who is described as *peregrinus*), they put circumstances together, and ripping open the hose of Eugonus, find that he has a toe too many on one of his feet, which was the case with the twin which had been sent into Apolonia. This proof is incontrovertible, that he is the same child who was born 'after the rising rection ith' north' twenty-four years before. Eugonus is then brought to Philogonus his father.

'*Phi.* O, welcome, my sonne!
'*Eug.* O, my father!
'*Phi.* O, my sonne!
'*Eug.* Blesse me, my father.
'*Phi.* God blesse the, my sonne.
'Eternall god which onely guidst th'imperial pole aloft,
'And also this terrestriall globe with all humaine affaires,
'Though frouninge fortune with his force doth tipe and tourne us oft,
'Thou canst miraculously helpe thy servaunts unawares.

* See Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, new edit. i. lv., for the music of this old burden, from a MS. of the reign of Richard II. and Henry IV.

'If twenty trumpes and twenty mouthes I had to sound thy praise,
'Or if I had kinge David's vaine, or Nester's eloquence,
'They would not serve me at this tyme due thankfulnes to raise,
'Towards me [thee] for thy unspeakable and wonderfull beneficence.
'O welcome home, my sonne, my sonne, my comfort and my joy!
'Thou art the lengthner of my life, the curar of my care.
'Here of my house possession take and all my lands enjoy.
'I thynke my selfe as happy now, as if a duke I wear.'

Misogonus, Orgalus, and Oenophilus, enter just afterwards with weapons, and after some abuse and confusion they are left on the stage, when the servants of Misogonus, finding how the land lies, desert him. Misogonus, struck by their ingratitude, begins to repent his past life; but before we arrive at his complete reformation, we have a singular scene, in which Cacurgus and the audience are concerned. The fool has been turned out of his place for his mal-practices, and after he has given this information to the spectators, he thus proceeds:—

'What were I best to do now, Sirs? which on yow can tell?
'Is there any good body amonge ye will take me in for god sake?
'And there be ere a gentleman here would have a foole with him dwell,
'Lett him speake: an' a' my worde a' shall a verye foole take.'

He appeals to them to 'take pity upon a stray fool,' and asks if there be any crier among them:

finding none, he himself, after an 'O-o-o-yes,' makes a proclamation of his want of a service, and of his qualifications as a fool. The MS. is here imperfect; but the greater part of his speech is legible, and he thus recommends himself by stating what he can do: he says he is a fool,

'That can rocke the cradle,
'And that can bare a bable:
'That can gether stickes,
'And that can chopp lekes:
'That can towrne spitt,
'And that can bith' fier 'sitt:
'That can ring a bell,
'And that can tales tell:
'That can whope at noone,
'And daunce when dinners done:
'That can washe dishes,
'And that can make ringes a' rushes:
'That can houlde a candell,
'And that can babies dandell:
'That can thresse maulte,
'And that can chope saulte:
'That can hold his finger
'In a hole, and therby linger:
'That can lay downe maidens bedds,
'And that can hold ther sickly heds:
'That can play at put pin,
'Blowe poynte and near lin [tire]:
'That can know my right hande,
'And tell twenty and near stande:
'That can finde a titmuns nest,
'And keape a robin redbreste:
'That can eat and drinke and play,
'Singe songes both night and day:

'That can go to th' winde mill,
'And that can do what sere ye will.
'And now for all this my taske,
'Small wages I will aske:
'A cape onelye once bith' yeare,
'And some prety cullerd geare:
'And drinke when sere I wull,
'And eat my belly full:
'For more I will not seke.
'He that will have me lett him speake.'

While he addresses the audience he stands on some elevation, for he says that they would laugh to see him fall. He can find nobody to hire him, on which he observes shrewdly, 'fooles now may go a begging, evry boddye's become so witty.'

The last scene remaining in the MS. is Scene iv. of Act iv., in which Misogonus, urged by Liturgus, becomes heartily repentant, and is reconciled to his father. It is difficult to imagine how another act could be made out of the story, which in the fragment seems completed.

From this sketch it is apparent that there is a good deal of variety of situation and character in the comedy of *Misogonus*, although the plot is simple and single. Of the elder brother we see nothing until the fourth act; but the younger brother is a very prominent personage, intended to exhibit the evil habits and propensities of a gay gallant in those days. He and his servants contrast well with the two old men, and their faithful attendant Liturgus; while Cacurgus, the fool, who endeavours to keep in with both parties,

comes forward in nearly every scene, and must have been a very amusing character, in his double capacity of rustic simpleton and artful mischief-maker. There are few pieces in the whole range of our ancient drama, as has been already observed, which display the important character of the domestic fool, in anything like so full and clear a light. Taking the date of the piece to be that which it bears, (and which I apprehend to be that of its performance at Kettering, or of the making of the transcript,) 1577, it is a production of much value, with reference to the history of our stage; but that value is greatly increased, since we have ascertained that it was first written about the year 1560. On this point the internal evidence is so strong, as in fact to be conclusive. Certain it is, that in all the plays of Shakespeare, the dates of which are doubtful, there is not any circumstance so decisive to fix the period when any one of them came from his pen, or was acted at the Globe or Blackfriars theatres.

Comedy in this country was of elder birth than tragedy: the earliest extant piece that can with any fitness be called a tragedy was written by Thomas Sackville (afterwards Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset) and Thomas Norton; and it was played before the Queen at Whitehall, by the members of the Inner Temple, on the 18th of January, 1561. Its correct, if not its most ancient title is '*The trayedy of Ferrex and Porrex*,' but it only bears it in the second edition of 1571, while it is called '*The tragedy of Gorboduc*,' in

the copies of 1565 and 1590*. The tragedy is reprinted in *Dodsley's Old Plays* and in Hawkins' *Origin of the English Drama*, and Warton has given an analysis of it accompanied by critical remarks, which display his usual good taste and extensive erudition†. I cannot do better than quote his brief but accurate abstract of the plot.

'Gorboduc, a king of Britain about 600 years be-
'fore Christ, made in his lifetime a division of his
'kingdom to his sons Ferrex and Porrex. The two
'young Princes within five years quarrelled for uni-
'versal sovereignty. A civil war ensued, and Porrex

* The last edition only has the date upon the title-page. Warton (Hist. Eng. Poet. iv. 379) mentions another copy of 1569 (as he suspected) which had belonged to Pope. On the title-page of the first edition it is said that the three first acts were written by Norton, and the two last by Sackville. This copy was not authorised by either of those who wrote it, and it occasioned the appearance of the second edition, which is without date, excepting that it states that it had been 'shewed on stage before the Queene's Majestie about nine yeares past, viz., the 18th day of Januarie, 1561.' The third edition of 1590, by Edward Allde, was only a re-impression of the spurious copy of 1565. For my quotations I have used the authentic edition, printed by John Day, in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

The circumstances of the life of Sackville are well known, and in the last edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays* (vol. i.) are some extracts from his funeral sermon by Dr. Abbot, in 1608. Norton was a barrister, and, as has been supposed, counsel at one period to the Stationers Company. He was appointed by the Privy Council one of a commission to inquire into certain disputes respecting the trade of printing, and he particularly complained of Wolfe, who had procured his freedom from the Fishmongers Company, and had printed works for which others had the sole right granted by the Crown. See Lansdown MS. No. 48.

† Hist. Eng. Poet. iv. 180, et seq., edit. 8vo.

'slew his elder brother Ferrex. Their mother Viden, 'who loved Ferrex best, revenged his death by enter- 'ing Porrex's chamber in the night, and murdering 'him in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the 'cruelty and treachery of this murder, rose in rebellion 'and killed both Viden and Gorboduc. The nobility 'then assembled, collected an army, and destroyed the 'rebels. An intestine war commenced between the 'chief lords: the succession of the crown became un- 'certain and arbitrary, for want of the lineal royal 'issue; and the country, destitute of a king, and 'wasted by domestic slaughter, was reduced to a state 'of the most miserable desolation.'

The death of Porrex by the hand of Videna (whom Warton calls Viden) occurs at the close of the fourth act, where the circumstances of the event are related by one of the characters: here, in fact, the tragedy ought to have ended, for the catastrophe is complete: but the author of this part of it eked it out, certainly not very amusingly, by various harangues and narrations, relative to the civil war which followed the death of all the members of the royal family. Dumb shows precede each of the five acts, prefiguring what is to occur*, and in that which is placed before Act v.

* Warton justly remarks that these dumb shows in our oldest tragedies were 'not always typical of the ensuing incidents.' They sometimes served as a compendious introduction of such circumstances as could not commodiously be comprehended within the bounds of the representation: they sometimes supplied deficiencies, and covered the want of business. (Hist. Eng. Poet. iii. 183., edit. 8vo.)

the impropriety has been committed of introducing a troop of soldiers, six hundred years before Christ, with fire arms, which are discharged to indicate the blood-shed about to ensue: 'First the drommes and fluites 'began to sound, during which there came forth upon 'the stage a company of *hargabusiers*, and of armed 'men, all in order of battaile. These, after their 'pieces discharged, and that the armed men had 'marched three times about the stage, departed' &c. Sir Philip Sidney, who, in his *Apology of Poetry*, (written about 1583) maintains the fitness of observing the ancient unities, while he complains, as we have seen, that those of time and place are neglected in *Ferrex and Porrex*, admits that it is 'full of stately 'speeches and well sounding phrases, climbing to the 'height of Seneca his stile, and full of notable morality, 'which it doth most delightfully teach*.' *Ferrex and Porrex* must have been vastly superior both in design and execution to most of the performances by which our ancestors, about the period when it was written, were delighted; but it cannot be disputed that the story proceeds with laborious sluggishness, and that the dialogue is generally as weighty as the plot it developes. The speeches are usually of most tedious extent, and the thoughts and sentiments more than sufficiently trite and commonplace.

* Sir P. Sidney did not live to see tragedy and comedy brought to the perfection which they afterwards attained, and mainly by the disregard of the unities. Had he lived ten years longer, his opinion might possibly have been different.

There is one circumstance connected with *Ferrex and Porrex* which does not seem to have been noticed any where with the emphasis due to its importance: it was the first play in the English language written in blank-verse. Many years elapsed before this heroic measure without rhyme was adopted on the public stages of London, but after the example had been set by Sackville and Norton, blank-verse was not unfrequently employed in performances written expressly for the court, and for representation before select audiences. On this account, principally, I shall make two short extracts from *Ferrex and Porrex*, the first from one of the three acts, assigned to Norton, and the last from one of the two acts, which are given to Sackville, by the printer of the first edition, which was surreptitiously published, without the knowledge and consent of the authors, a few years after it was originally acted. Warton was of opinion, merely on the ground of the uniformity of style, that Norton had little or nothing to do with the composition of the play; but independently of the consideration that poets of that day, making a novel experiment, and penning blank-verse (which usually only differed from couplets in the absence of rhyme,) would write in a similar style, it is to be remembered, not only that the printer of the earliest impression assigns the two last acts to Norton, but that a contemporary poet of no mean consideration, Jasper Heywood, in the year 1560, couples the names of Sackville and Norton: perhaps, in the lax phraseology of that time, the words 'sonnets' and 'ditties'

include even the play before us, which might be finished in 1560, though not performed until the year after:—Heywood's words are;

> 'There Sackvyldes sonnetts sweetely sauste,
> 'And featly fyned be;
> 'There Norton's ditties do delight,' &c.

These lines are part of a long supposed dialogue between Seneca and Heywood, (at that time a very young man, for he says,

> 'Thou seest dame Nature yet hath sette no heares upon my chinne,')

who was publishing his translation of *Thyestes:* this might lead him naturally to a recollection of the dramatic poets of the day, at the head of whom he would place Sackville and Norton. Supposing, however, that Heywood had no such allusion, I do not see sufficient reason for depriving Norton of what the contemporary printer, who had perhaps derived the copy and the information from some friend of one of the authors, considered his right. Had he not believed the fact to be as he represented it, it would probably have answered his purpose better to have published the tragedy as the entire work of a man of Sackville's character and station, than to have given him an inferior coadjutor. The following lines are perhaps as good as any to be found in Norton's portion of the tragedy: they are from a speech by Arostus, in the first act, after the old king has opened to his counsellors his plan for dividing his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex.

'I thinke in all as erst your grace hath saide.
'Firste when you shall unlode your aged mynde
'Of hevye care and troubles manifolde,
'And laye the same upon my lordes, your sonnes,
'Whose growing yeres may beare the burden long,
'And long I pray the Goddes to graunt it so;
'And in your life while you shall so beholde
'Their rule, their vertues, and their noble deedes,
'Suche as their kinde behighteth to us all,
'Great be the profites that shall growe therof.
'Your age in quiet shall the longer last;
'Your lasting age shalbe their longer stay:
'For cares of kynges, that rule as you have ruled,
'For publique wealth and not for private joye,
'Do wast mannes lyfe and hasten crooked age
'With furrowed face and with enfeebled lymmes,
'To draw on creepyng death a swifter pace.
'They two, yet yong, shall beare the parted reigne
'With greater ease than one, now olde, alone
'Can welde the whole; for whom muche harder is
'With lessened strength the double weight to beare.'

The impersonation of 'crooked age' in the latter part of this quotation is forcible, but the lines are heavy and monotonous, without variety of pause and inflection. The same faults, and in nearly the same degree, belong to the lines by Sackville, as may be judged by the subsequent extract from the second scene of the fifth act, which forms part of a speech by Eubulus, secretary to the old King.

'O Jove, how are these people's harts abusde!
'What blind fury thus headlong caries them!
'That though so many bookes, so many rolles
'Of auncient time recorde what grevous plagues
'Light on these rebells aye, and though so oft

Their eares have heard their aged fathers tell
'What juste reward these traitours still receyve;
'Yea, though themselves have sene depe death and bloud,
'By strangling cord and slaughter of the sword,
'To such assigned, yet can they not beware;
'Yet can not stay their lewde rebellious handes,
'But suffring, loe, fowle treason to distaine
'Their wretched myndes, forget their loyall hart,
'Reject all truth, and rise against their prince.
'A ruthefull case that those whom duties bond,
'Whom grafted law by nature, truth, and faith,
'Bound to preserve their countrey and their king,
'Borne to defend their common wealth and prince,
'Even they should geve consent thus to subvert
'Thee, Brittaine land, and from thy wombe should spring
'(O native soile!) those that will needs destroy
'And ruyne thee, and eke themselves in fine.'

As far as mere versification is concerned, perhaps, on a close comparison of these two passages, the palm ought to be assigned to Sackville. According to Warton, his coadjutor could have had no more to do with the tragedy, than perhaps the preparation of the dumb shows. Choruses in rhyme close the four first acts, and the last act is terminated by a didactic speech of nearly two-hundred lines. Three of the choruses are in six-line stanzas, the four first lines of which rhyme alternately, while the two last form a couplet: the chorus to the third act only is in alternate rhymes.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Printed by W. Clowes, Stamford-street,


00066458

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 24 February, 2016